
MEMORANDUM TO: Mayor and City Council
Planning Commission

FROM: Laura Mehfoud, Long Range Planner

DATE: May 30, 2025

SUBJECT: Staff Analysis:
Application Z-9928-2024 Zoning Map Amendment and
Schematic Development Plan
481 N Frederick Ave, 101 Lakeforest Blvd, 702 Russell Ave

APPLICANT

VIKA Maryland, LLC
20251 Century Boulevard Suite 400
Germantown, MD
20874

OWNER

Perry-Russell LP, Frederick Avenue Associates, and Professional Equity LP
6000 Executive Blvd Suite 400
North Bethesda, MD
20852

TAX MAP REFERENCE

Tax Map: FT 42, Parcels: N319, N264, N225

TAX ACCOUNT NUMBER

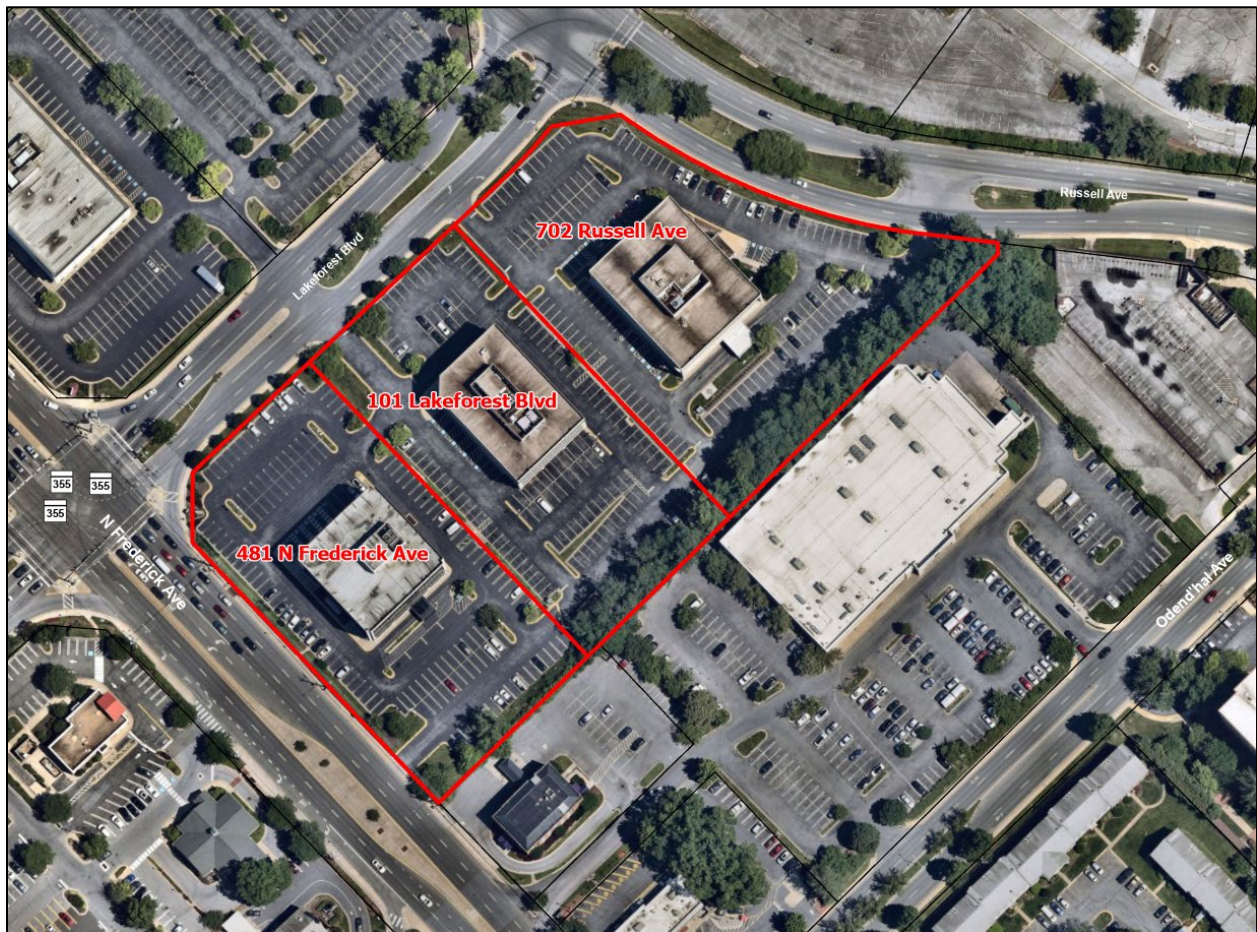
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REQUEST

The Applicant, VIKA Maryland, LLC, has submitted amendment to zoning map application Z-9928-2024, to rezone a 6.5 acre area, consisting of 3 parcels, from the C-2 (General Commercial) zone to the CD (Corridor Development) zone, and to establish a schematic development plan (SDP), in accordance with City Code § 24-4.4 (H) "Application for CD Zone and schematic development plan approval." The SDP proposes a new multi-family residential building with ground floor commercial uses. In support of these requests, the Applicant has included a statement of justification and support (Statement), included as exhibit 59.

LOCATION

The subject properties ("Site") include three parcels located at 481 N Frederick Ave, 101 Lakeforest Blvd, and 702 Russell Ave. The Site is bound by Lakeforest Blvd to the northwest, N Frederick Ave to the southwest, Russell Ave to the northeast, and commercial properties to the southeast.



BACKGROUND

The 6.5 acre Site is currently zoned C-2 and is developed with three 4-story office buildings surrounded by surface parking. The Applicant submitted a zoning map amendment application to rezone the Site to CD, along with an associated schematic development plan (SDP). The SDP proposes removing the existing office buildings at 481 N Frederick Ave and 101 Lakeforest Blvd and constructing a new 8 story multi-family rental building with ground floor commercial uses. A joint public hearing before the Mayor and City Council and the Planning Commission was held on April 21, 2025.¹ During the course of the hearing, the Applicant presented an overview of the application, including the following aspects:

- Current conditions
- Schematic development plan overview, including layout, uses, and Site access and circulation
- Conceptual architecture and renderings
- Master Plan compliance
- Benefits to the community

During the joint public hearing, the Mayor and City Council, Planning Commission and public posed questions and made comments regarding the following topics:

- Pedestrian connectivity to Lakeforest Mall
- Unit breakdown (inclusion of three-bedroom units)
- Building height
- Sunlight access in courtyard
- Phasing
- Retail location
- Traffic Study intersections studied.

Three members of the public testified during the hearing and made comments regarding the following:

- Expressed concerns with the lack of three-bedroom units
- Requested more than 15% MPDU units.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Planning Commission announced, by motion, the closing of their record on May 23, 2025 with recommendation scheduled for June 4, 2025. Subsequently, the Mayor and City Council announced, by motion, the closing of their record on June 13, 2025 with policy discussion and final action anticipated for July 7, 2025.

¹Exhibits 51 and 56

Following the joint public hearing and prior to the closing of the Planning Commission record at 5:00 p.m. on May 23, 2025, staff received comments from three individuals, all expressing concerns about traffic generated by the proposed project.²

The Applicant submitted a separate supplementary statement responding to the comments raised during the joint public hearing, which is included as exhibit 58. Items unchanged from the joint public hearing, including Master Plan recommendations, zoning and site plan history, and APFO requirements, can be found in the Preliminary Background Report.³ The following analysis provides an overview of the application and focuses on the Applicant's response to the joint public hearing comments.

Z-9928-2024 PROPOSAL

Schematic Development Plan

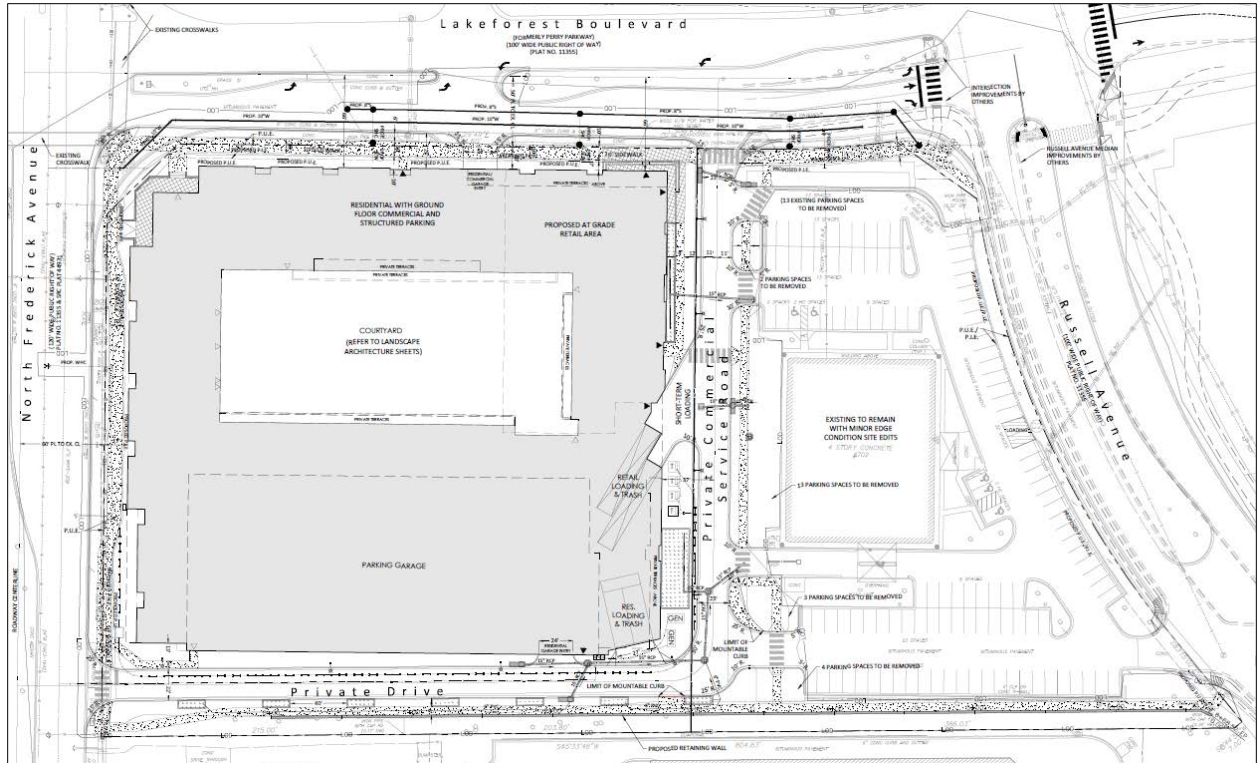
The Applicant has submitted an application seeking to change the zoning of the Site from the C-2 (General Commercial) zone to the CD (Corridor Development) zone and to establish a schematic development plan, in accordance with City Code § 24-4.4 (H) "Application for CD Zone and schematic development plan approval." The SDP proposes removing the existing office buildings at 481 N Frederick Ave and 101 Lakeforest Blvd and constructing a new 8 story multi-family rental building with ground floor commercial uses. The residential building will include up to 410 units with up to 20,100 square feet of commercial space. The existing office building at 702 Russell will remain with minor edge and parking lot improvements.

The lobby entrance for the residential units will be at the corner of N Frederick Ave and Lakeforest Blvd. The proposed ground floor commercial space will front Lakeforest Blvd with the entrance located at the northeast corner of proposed multi-family building, at the corner of Lakeforest Blvd and a new commercial service road that will bisect the Site between the new building and the existing office building at 702 Russell Ave.

The new multi-family building will include structured parking for both residents and patrons of the commercial use, and an interior courtyard with amenities for residents.

² Exhibits 53-55

³ Exhibit 52



SDP Excerpt, Exhibit 60

Applicant's Response

A question was raised during the hearing regarding the location of the retail space. The Applicant included a discussion of the reasoning behind the retail location in their response letter, noting the following:

- The Site slopes down from N Frederick Ave towards Russell Ave. This topography allows the first floor of the building to front on N Frederick Ave with one level of parking underneath and pushes the commercial loading areas towards the northeast side of the building.
- The retail façade will be activated with seating and landscaping and will create synergy with the proposed mix of uses, including with the existing office uses in 702 Russell immediately adjacent. The addition of wayfinding signage on N Frederick Ave will draw more attention to the space.
- The retail space will be proximate to the proposed transit station on Russell Ave and along the main pedestrian connection from the new station to N Frederick Ave.

Questions regarding the proposed building height and sunlight access in the courtyard were also raised during the hearing. The Applicant provided the following response:

- Construction costs and the uncertainty of tariffs impacted the proposed building height, with eight stories determined to be financially feasible. The project proposes Type IA construction (concrete) for the parking and podium levels and

Type IIIA (wood-frame over non-combustible) construction for the upper residential floors.

- The courtyard is ½ acre in size and designed with a width-to-height ratio to maximize sunlight and reduce shadowing from surrounding massing. Amenities will include a pool, tables and seating, grills, and landscaping. Interior units will have terraces and windows overlooking the courtyard.

A question was raised during the hearing regarding the current tenants. The Applicant noted in their response letter that “The retention of 702 Russell Avenue is necessary to transition tenants under existing leases out of 481 Frederick Avenue and 101 Lakeforest Boulevard for their demolition. This allows the Applicant to move forward with the Project while meeting its contractual obligations and providing continuity of its tenants’ business operations and provision of services within the City.”⁴

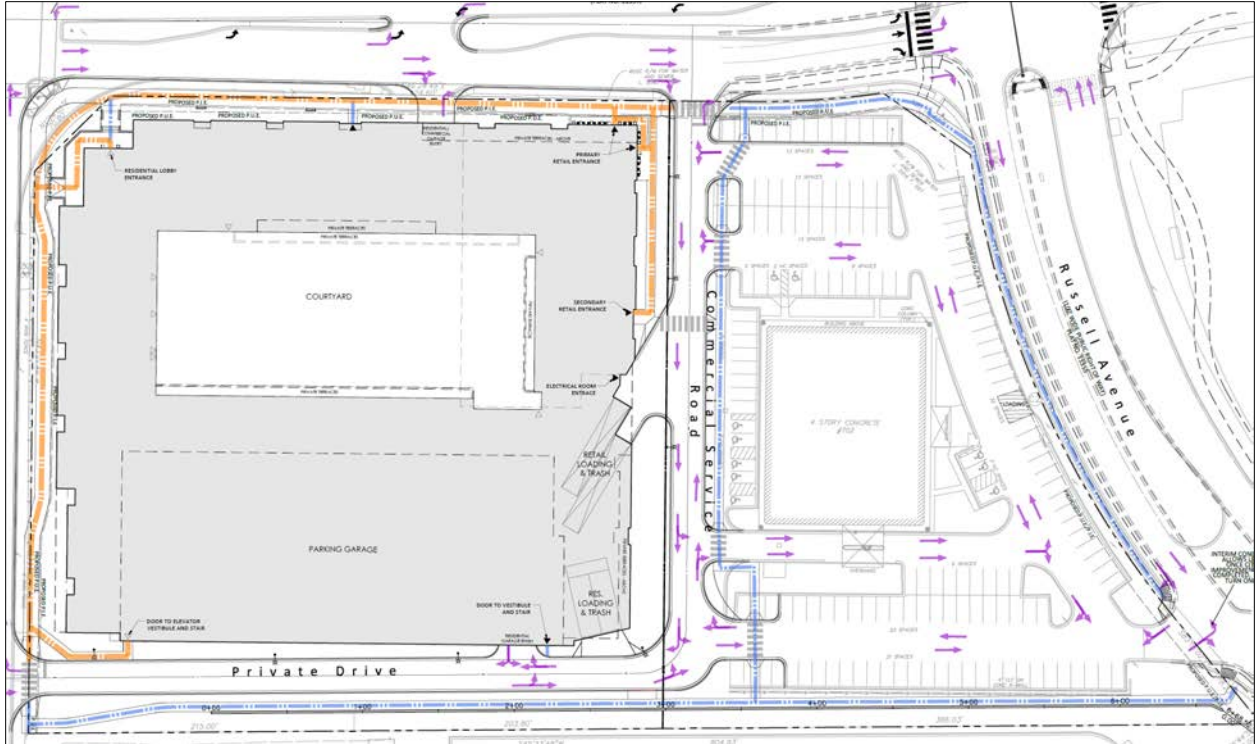
Staff Comments

Staff is supportive of the proposed schematic development plan overall and is of the opinion that the Applicant has adequately addressed questions from the hearing regarding the location of the retail space and the usability of the courtyard.

Site Circulation

A new commercial service road will bisect the Site and wrap around the new multi-family building, connecting Lakeforest Blvd to N Frederick Ave. Parking along the southwest side of the 702 Russell Ave office building will be removed to make space for the new road and sidewalk. Access to the existing surface parking lot for 702 Russell Ave will be maintained from Russell Ave with access also provided along the new commercial service road. Access to the parking garage in the new residential building will be provided along Lakeforest Blvd (for residents and commercial patrons) and the new road on the southeast side of the building (for residents only). A 10-foot wide shared use path will be provided along Lakeforest Blvd, connecting N Frederick Ave to Russell Ave, and along the N Frederick Ave frontage. A 6-foot wide sidewalk will be provided along the new commercial service road. Staff notes that the plans reflect the future improvements to Russell Ave and the Russell Ave/ Lakeforest Blvd intersection to be completed by the City and the mall redevelopment.

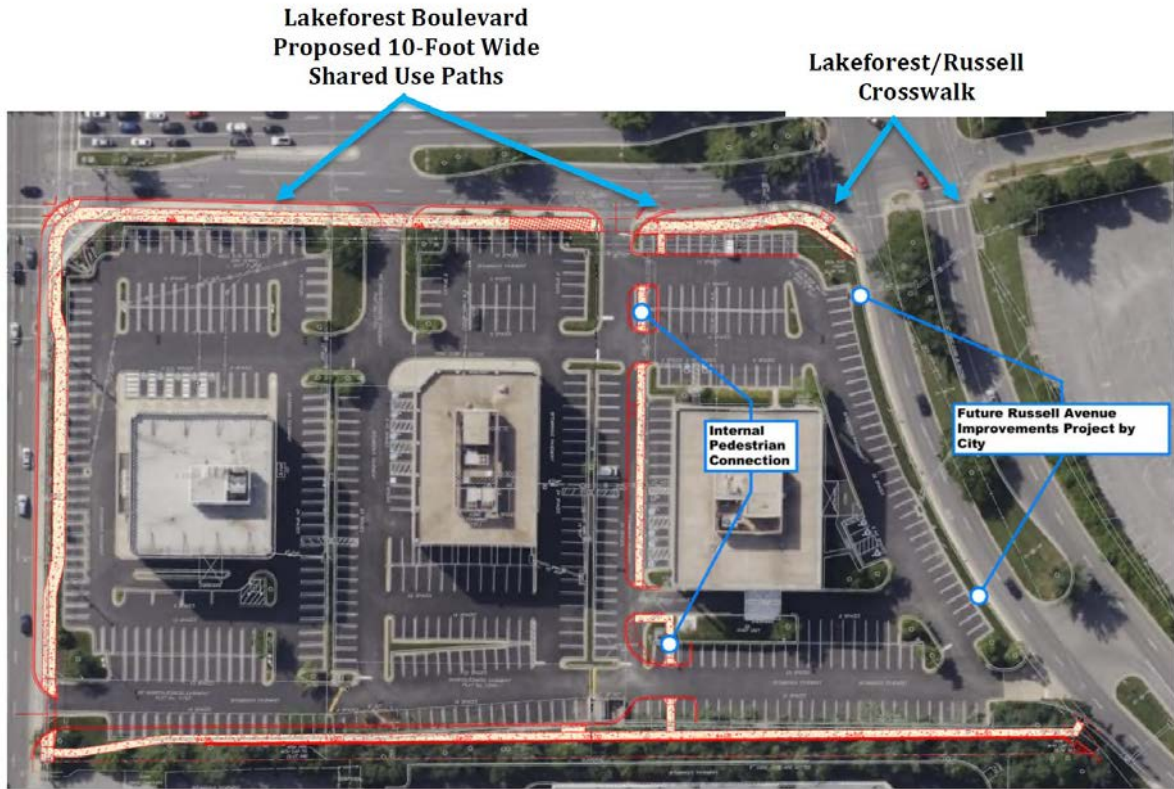
⁴ Exhibit 58, page 9



SDP Excerpt, Exhibit 60

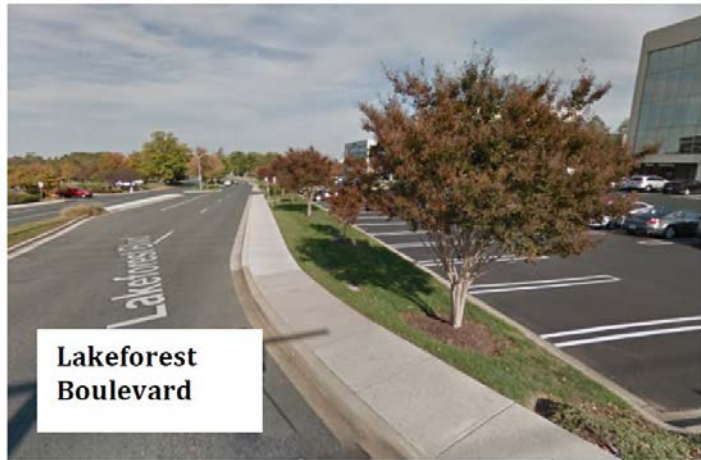
Applicant's Response

A question was raised during the hearing regarding pedestrian connectivity to Lakeforest Mall. The Applicant provided the below graphic in their response letter to highlight the proposed pedestrian connections through the Site. Connectivity will be further enhanced with the City's improvements to Russell Ave.



The Applicant’s response letter also noted the following:

- The proposed 10-foot wide shared use path improves upon current conditions and will replace the existing 5-foot wide sidewalk along Lakeforest Blvd.
 - Existing condition:



- Landscaping along the 10-foot shared use path and outdoor seating in front of the retail space will help activate the streetscape along Lakeforest Blvd and draw pedestrians towards the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment and future transit station.



Questions were also raised during the hearing regarding the intersections analyzed in the Traffic Study. The Traffic Study has been approved by the City’s Department of Public Works.⁵ As stated during the hearing and reiterated in the Applicant’s response letter, the scoping of the Traffic Study was determined in conjunction with the Department of Public Works. The City determined which intersections to include in the Study, taking into consideration those intersections that will be improved with the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment.

Staff Comments

Staff notes that the proposed commercial service road meets the City’s standards and appreciates that the Applicant has removed parking to facilitate a new sidewalk. The portion of the new road labeled “Private Drive” on the plans still meets the City’s standards for a commercial service road. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant on crosswalk alignment and connectivity at final site plan.

Staff is of the opinion that the Applicant has adequately addressed questions that were brought up during the hearing regarding pedestrian connectivity to Lakeforest Mall. The proposed 10-foot wide shared use path along Lakeforest Blvd activated with landscaping and street furniture is a significant improvement on the existing condition, and provides a safe connection from N Frederick Avenue to Russell Ave.

Unit Mix

The SDP proposes studio, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom units in the new multi-family building. This unit mix was used to assess transportation adequacy at a denser unit mix and will be further refined at final site plan.

⁵ Exhibit 44

Residential Units							
Unit Mix	Unit Count	Type Percentage		Market Rate Units		MPDU Units	
studio	62	15%	62	52	14.94%	10	16.13%
1BR	245	60%	245	209	60.06%	36	58.06%
2BR	103	25%	103	87	25.00%	16	25.81%
	Up to 410	100%	410	348	84.88%	62	15.122%

Applicant's Response

Concerns with the proposed unit mix were brought up during the hearing, with a focus on the lack of three-bedroom units. The Applicant stated in their response letter that they “intend to provide an appropriate number of three-bedroom units to support a diverse range of housing needs”, and that “the final unit mix will be shaped by a future market study and further analysis of Project feasibility and design.”⁶ The response letter also discussed the following:

- The unit mix on the SDP is intentionally dense to allow greater flexibility. The inclusion of larger units will ultimately decrease the total unit count. Proposing the maximum possible unit count at SDP will prevent the need for an amendment and ensure adequacy of the Traffic Study.
- The final unit mix will be approved by the Planning Commission at the time of final site plan, and the market study will be provided during the final site plan process. This timing will provide the most up to date data to inform the unit mix. Variables such as “construction costs, financing, and timeline uncertainty”⁷ make it difficult to fix the unit mix at this time.

Staff Comments

Staff is of the opinion that more two and three-bedroom units should be included in the project, but understands the Applicant's reasoning behind the denser mix at SDP and the timing of the market study. A proposed condition has been included to address the provision of three-bedroom units at the time of final site plan.

Proposed Uses

The non-residential potential uses proposed for the Site are listed below and apply to both the commercial space in the new building and the existing 702 Russell office building that is to remain. The new City zoning ordinance groups specific uses into more general categories to allow for greater flexibility when calculating parking requirements and processing changes in use. The list below includes some of the broader use categories (such as “Retail and Personal Services”) with certain specific uses within the category

⁶ Exhibit 58, page 7

⁷ Ibid.

prohibited. Staff notes that “retail store with gas” was added as a prohibited use since the public hearing.

NON-RESIDENTIAL POTENTIAL USES
Entertainment and Recreational Uses
Integrated Light Manufacturing*
Art and Cultural Centers
Educational Institutions
Professional Business Services
Retail and Personal Services**

* - Except electronic, precision instruments, additive manufacturing, medical supplies and devices, molecular engineering/nanotechnology, mechanical equipment and micro-manufacturing and cyber security technologies and similar uses are prohibited in any residential building.

** - Except animal boarding, cremation services, firearm sales, funeral homes, Retail store with gas and hotel are prohibited at the subject property.

Staff Comments

Staff is supportive of the proposed uses and is of the opinion that they are appropriate for the Site and provide sufficient flexibility for future tenants.

Architecture, Landscaping, and Forest Conservation Plan

The Applicant has provided conceptual architecture renderings and elevations, which will be further refined at final site plan. Building materials of the new multi-family building include glass, metal trims, masonry, and fiber cement panels. Below is a rendering taken from the Applicant’s architectural plans. More detailed elevations can be found in the architectural plan set.⁸

⁸ Exhibit 63



VIEW LOOKING EAST - FROM N FREDERICK AVE

Landscaping will consist of ornamental trees and foundation plantings to activate the streetscape. Street trees will be planted along Lakeforest Blvd and the new commercial service road. The urban infill context of the Site limits opportunities for new tree plantings; as such, the Applicant intends to satisfy the afforestation requirement primarily through fee-in-lieu.

Staff Comments

Staff is supportive of the proposed architecture and notes that it will be further refined at final site plan. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant on adequate landscaping and further opportunities for canopy coverage credit during final site plan.

STAFF FINDINGS ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

City Code Section 24-4.4 (H) lays out the requirements for CD zone map amendments:

(H) Application for CD Zone and schematic development plan approval.

(1) An applicant shall file, together with the prescribed application fee, an application for the establishment of the CD Zone, to be processed pursuant to the provisions of Section 24-12.3– Zoning Map Amendments, and as part of this application for separate approval, a schematic development plan pursuant to the provisions of Section 24-4.2 – Floating Zones and Section 24-12.5 – Schematic Development Plans.

(2) An application to establish CD zoning must receive approval of both the rezoning and schematic development plan. The city council cannot approve such application without approving both the rezoning and schematic development plan.

As noted in Section 24-4.4(H)(2), the zoning map amendment and schematic development plan are part of one application and both must be approved - the City Council cannot approve the application without approving both the rezoning and the SDP.

While it is one application, there are two sets of findings that must be met for approval: one for the rezoning and one for the schematic development plan.

Rezoning Findings

Approval of the rezoning to CD is dependent upon the findings required under Section 24-4.2(B). The following outlines the required findings and justifications for City Council approval of the rezoning in zoning map amendment application Z-9928-2024:

Sec. 24-4.2(B) – Affixing floating zones

(4) Decision criteria for establishment of a floating zone by map amendment. The city council may approve the mapping of a CBD, CD, MCD, or MXD zone by map amendment only upon finding that:

(a) The rezoning application meets or accomplishes the purposes, objectives, and minimum standards and requirements of the zone; and

➤ *Section 24-4.4(A) – Purpose*

(1) Encourage development, redevelopment and renovation of declining or underutilized properties along the corridor.

Application Z-9928-2024 requests rezoning to CD to facilitate the redevelopment of an underutilized 6.5 acre site along the corridor, proposing to replace aging, outdated office buildings surrounded by large surface parking lots with a new multi-family residential building with ground floor commercial uses. The CD zone will allow residential uses not allowed under the current C-2 zone, thus facilitating a denser mixed-use infill development on a prominent corner in the Frederick Avenue corridor.

(2) Create a more sustainable development pattern and enhance the city's sense of place.

Application Z-9928-2024's rezoning to CD repositions the Site, allowing greater flexibility in uses and facilitating the redevelopment of outdated office buildings. Rezoning to CD will facilitate the associated schematic development plan, allowing a more sustainable mixed-use development with a denser, more walkable urban form. The proposed development will create synergy with the future Lakeforest Mall redevelopment, allowing

residential development in close proximity to the future transit station. The proposed multi-family building and activated streetscape will create visual interest at the North Frederick Avenue/Lakeforest Boulevard intersection, enhancing the pedestrian experience and the City's sense of place. The project's prominent location at the intersection of North Frederick Avenue and Lakeforest Blvd establishes the Property as a *de facto* gateway to the future redeveloped Mall Property and a visual landmark.

(3) Promote revitalization within the Corridor by encouraging new private investment that also fosters equity and livability.

Application Z-9928-2024 facilitates the associated schematic development plan that redevelops an underutilized site with a more dense mixed-use development. Rezoning to CD allows the introduction of new housing in direct proximity to the future transit station proposed as part of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment. This fosters equity by creating housing opportunities for those that rely on transit for mobility. Proposed pedestrian infrastructure improvements will promote connectivity to the future transit center and Lakeforest Mall redevelopment as well as surrounding commercial uses, enhancing livability along the corridor. The schematic development plan proposes retaining the existing office building at 702 Russell Ave, thus preserving employment opportunities for residents.

(4) Create clearly defined regulations that provide more certainty of what is feasible on a property and create opportunities to add value through density and mix of uses.

Application Z-9928-2024's rezoning to CD provides an opportunity to add value to the property by allowing greater flexibility in uses, including residential not allowed under the current C-2 zone. The CD zone will facilitate the associated schematic development plan that proposes a denser, more walkable urban development with a balanced mix of uses that is in close proximity to the future transit station and Lakeforest Mall redevelopment. The synergy created between this redevelopment and the future redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall adds value to the corridor and could help spur further investment.

(5) Promote quality development through flexible development standards and a proactive design approach.

Through the flexible development standards afforded by the CD zone, the associated schematic development plan proposes quality development at appropriate densities to facilitate a livable community. The associated schematic development plan brings in height and density not previously seen in this section of the Frederick Avenue corridor and allows a mix of uses not permitted under the current C-2 zone. The proposed development leverages the future transit station, facilitating a synergistic mix of residential, commercial, and office uses in a walkable community.

➤ *Section 24-4.4(B) - Minimum location requirements*

The Site meets the minimum locational requirements as it was identified for CD zoning under the 2009 Master Plan Land Use Element as Map Designation 36.

➤ *Section 24-160G.4. – Development standards*

The required associated schematic development plan meets the applicable development standards:

- The proposed FAR of 1.78 complies with the maximum 3.0 FAR permitted in the zone.
- The proposed 8-story building height complies with the maximum 10-story building height permitted in the zone.
- No minimum setbacks are required for this Site.
- Off Street Parking meets the requirements of Section 24-4.4(F) and Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- The proposed uses are allowed uses under the CD zone.

(b) The rezoning application is in accord with recommendations in the applicable land use master plan for the property and is consistent with any special conditions or requirements contained in said land use master plan; and

This Site is identified as Map Designation 36 in the 2009 Master Plan Land Use Element. The Master Plan recommends rezoning the property to CD and adopting a commercial-office-residential land use designation. Application Z-9928-2024 complies with these recommendations by rezoning to CD, and the associated schematic development plan proposes a mix of residential, commercial, and office uses.

(c) The rezoning application will be internally and externally compatible and harmonious with existing and planned land uses in the areas within the proposed rezoning and adjacent areas; and

Application Z-9928-2024 and the associated schematic development plan are compatible and harmonious with the surrounding existing and planned land uses. The residential component afforded by rezoning to CD is compatible and harmonious with the existing mix of commercial, medical office, retail and service uses in the surrounding area, which are conveniently located to serve the future residents within a short walk. The proposed density and height are compatible with the future redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall. The associated schematic development plan locates denser development and new residential uses in close proximity to the future transit station and new commercial and employment uses approved as part of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment.

(d) That the rezoning, if approved, would reflect the goals and intent of the city's strategic plan.

Application Z-9928-2024's proposed CD zoning will reflect the following strategies of the City's FY 22 Strategic Plan:

- 10. Implement strategies that encourage reinvestment in aging commercial and multi-family properties.
 - Rezoning to CD facilitates the redevelopment of aging office buildings with a new residential mixed-use project.
- 8. Improve access and integration among employment nodes, residential areas, and amenities; and 14. Improve connectivity of people to services, activities, employment, and points of interest.
 - Rezoning to CD allows the location of residential uses in close proximity to the future transit station, thus connecting residents to jobs and amenities in other areas of the City via transit.
- 11. Pursue strategies to provide a mix of housing options for a variety of income levels.
 - Rezoning to CD allows new residential uses.

Schematic Development Plan Findings

Approval of the associated schematic development plan is dependent upon the findings required under Section 24-12.5(F). The following outlines the required findings and justifications for City Council approval of the schematic development plan in zoning map amendment application Z-9928-2024:

Sec. 24-12.5(f)(2) – Decision criteria for CD schematic development plan. The city council may approve a schematic development plan either as part of a zoning map amendment or standalone only upon the finding that:

(a) The plan meets or accomplishes the purposes, objectives and minimum standards and requirements of the zone; and

➤ *Section 24-4.4(A) – Purpose*

(1) Encourage development, redevelopment and renovation of declining or underutilized properties along the corridor.

Application Z-9928-2024 proposes to redevelop an underutilized 6.5 acre site along the corridor, replacing aging, outdated office buildings surrounded by large surface parking lots with a new multi-family residential building with ground floor commercial uses. The CD zone will allow residential uses not allowed under the current C-2 zone, thus facilitating a denser mixed-use infill development on a prominent corner in the Frederick Avenue corridor.

(2) Create a more sustainable development pattern and enhance the city's sense of place.

Application Z-9928-2024 proposes the redevelopment of outdated office buildings with a more sustainable mixed-use development in a denser, more walkable urban form. The proposed development will create synergy with the future Lakeforest Mall redevelopment, allowing residential development in close proximity to the future transit station. The proposed multi-family building and activated streetscape will create visual interest at the North Frederick Avenue/Lakeforest Boulevard intersection, enhancing the pedestrian experience and the City's sense of place. The project's prominent location at the intersection of North Frederick Avenue and Lakeforest Blvd establishes the Property as a *de facto* gateway to the future redeveloped Mall Property and a visual landmark.

(3) Promote revitalization within the Corridor by encouraging new private investment that also fosters equity and livability.

Application Z-9928-2024 proposes redeveloping an underutilized site with a more dense mixed-use development. The schematic development plan introduces housing in direct proximity to the future transit station proposed as part of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment. This fosters equity by creating housing opportunities for those that rely on transit for mobility. Proposed pedestrian infrastructure improvements will promote connectivity to the future transit center and the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment as well as surrounding commercial uses, enhancing livability along the corridor. The schematic development plan proposes retaining the existing office building at 702 Russell Ave, thus preserving employment opportunities for residents.

(4) Create clearly defined regulations that provide more certainty of what is feasible on a property and create opportunities to add value through density and mix of uses.

Application Z-9928-2024 proposes a mix of residential, commercial, and office uses and adds density to an underutilized site on the corridor. This denser, more walkable urban development with a balanced mix of uses will be in close proximity to the future transit station and Lakeforest Mall redevelopment. The synergy created between this redevelopment and the future redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall adds value to the corridor and could help spur further investment.

(5) Promote quality development through flexible development standards and a proactive design approach.

Through the flexible development standards afforded by the CD zone, the associated schematic development plan proposes quality development at appropriate densities to facilitate a livable community. The schematic development plan brings in height and density not previously seen in this section of the Frederick Avenue corridor and allows a mix of uses not permitted under the current C-2 zone. The proposed development leverages the future transit station, facilitating a synergistic mix of residential, commercial, and office uses in a walkable community.

➤ *Section 24-4.4(B) - Minimum location requirements*

The Site meets the minimum locational requirements as it was identified for CD zoning under the 2009 Master Plan Land Use Element as Map Designation 36.

➤ *Section 24-160G.4. – Development standards*

Application Z-9928-2024 meets all applicable development standards:

- The proposed FAR of 1.78 complies with the maximum 3.0 FAR permitted in the zone.
- The proposed 8-story building height complies with the maximum 10-story building height permitted in the zone.
- No minimum setbacks are required for this Site.
- Off street parking meets the requirements of Section 24-4.4(F) and Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- The proposed uses are allowed uses under the CD zone.

(b) The plan is in accord with the area master plan and any accompanying special condition or requirements contained in said master plan for the area under consideration; and

This Site is identified as Map Designation 36 in the 2009 Master Plan Land Use Element. The Master Plan recommends rezoning the property to CD and adopting a commercial-office-residential land use designation. Application Z-9928-2024 complies with these recommendations by rezoning to CD and the associated schematic development plan proposes a mix of residential, commercial, and office uses. The Master Plan recommends a “mixed use project with a balanced mix of commercial/office and residential uses” and encourages consolidation of smaller lots. The schematic development plan proposes consolidating two lots to add a new residential building with ground floor commercial uses and maintaining the existing office uses in the 702 Russell Avenue building, thus creating a balanced mix of uses. The Master Plan also states that any proposal should relate to the potential redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall. The schematic development plan leverages the future transit station, locating new residential uses within a walkable distance, and provides enhanced pedestrian infrastructure connecting residents to the future Lakeforest Mall redevelopment.

(c) The plan will be internally and externally compatible and harmonious with existing and planned land uses in the CD zoned area and adjacent areas; and

Application Z-9928-2024 and the associated schematic development plan are compatible and harmonious with the surrounding existing and planned land uses. The proposed residential component is compatible and harmonious with the existing mix of commercial, medical office, retail and service uses in the surrounding area, which are conveniently located to serve the future residents within a short walk. The proposed density and height

are compatible with the future redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall. The schematic development plan locates denser development and new residential uses in close proximity to the future transit station and new commercial and employment uses approved as part of the Lakeforest Mall redevelopment.

(d) The existing or planned public facilities are adequate to service the proposed development contained in the plan; and

Application SDP-9928-2024 meets this finding by satisfying the City's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) for fire response time, water and sewer service, traffic impacts, and school capacity, as follows:

Water and Sewer Services and Public Utilities-

The Site is currently developed with both public water and public sewer service and has WSSC categories of S-1 and W-1.

Fire and Emergency Services-

The Site is within the ten-minute response areas of four Montgomery County Fire and Rescue stations: Station 8 (Gaithersburg), Station 28 (Gaithersburg/Muncaster), Station 31 (Rockville) and Station 34 (Germantown/Milestone).

Schools-

The Site is within the Gaithersburg Cluster and is served by Gaithersburg Elementary, Gaithersburg Middle, and Gaithersburg High. According to the FY 25 City APFO Schools Capacity Memo, no residential development moratoriums are in place as capacity exists at all schools serving the City. Thus, the school capacity standards of § 24-246 are satisfied. Additionally, none of the schools serving the Site are currently subject to the utilization premium payment fee.

Traffic Impacts-

The Applicant submitted a Traffic Impact Study (TIS), designated as application number TRF-9929-2024, performed by Wells and Associates, Inc. The analysis concludes that under total future conditions, all of the study intersections will continue to operate at acceptable CLV standards during both the AM and PM peak hours and no mitigation is required. The Department of Public Works has reviewed and approved the traffic impact study.

(e) That the plan, if approved reflect the goals and intent of the city's strategic plan.

Application Z-9928-2024 will reflect the following strategies of the City's FY 22 Strategic Plan:

- 10. Implement strategies that encourage reinvestment in aging commercial and multi-family properties.
 - The schematic development plan proposes the redevelopment of aging office buildings with a new residential mixed-use project.

- 8. Improve access and integration among employment nodes, residential areas, and amenities; and 14. Improve connectivity of people to services, activities, employment, and points of interest.
 - The schematic development plan proposes the location of residential uses in close proximity to the future transit station, thus connecting residents to jobs and amenities in other areas of the City via transit.
- 11. Pursue strategies to provide a mix of housing options for a variety of income levels.
 - The schematic development plan proposes new multi-family residential uses.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff is supportive of the subject Z-9928-2024 application. The application meets and accomplishes the purposes, objectives and minimal standards and requirements of the CD zone and is in conformance with the 2009 Master Plan Land Use Element. The schematic development plan proposes redeveloping an underutilized site and will be compatible with existing surrounding uses and the future redevelopment of Lakeforest Mall. The introduction of residential in close proximity to the future transit center and the proposed pedestrian infrastructure improvements foster equity and promote a livable community. This project firmly reflects the positive impacts of the Lakeforest redevelopment on the surrounding area and creates a revitalized Lakeforest Boulevard.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission, based upon the evidence in the record and the findings presented in the staff analysis, recommend approval of Zoning Map Amendment Z-9928-2024 to the Mayor and City Council with three(3) conditions:

- 1) Applicant must provide 3-bedroom units in the final unit mix, that may in part be informed by a housing market study reviewed by the City prior to submission of any final site plan application.
- 2) Applicant must submit revised Schematic Development Plan, as requested, to satisfy all City staff clerical and graphic comments prior to signing of plans by Planning staff.
- 3) Applicant must submit final retaining wall plans and proposed authorized offsite easements that may be required for the wall construction for approval by the Department of Public Works prior to Planning Commission's final site plan review.