

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COUNCIL OF FALLS CHURCH
September 21, 2015

Dear Falls Church City Council & Planning Division:

RE: West Broad Street Small Area Plan

The ESC submits these comments and recommendations on the latest proposal for the development of West Broad Street Small Area Plans, which was presented to the ESC on September 17.

We continue to view mixed-use developments of this type as beneficial to the environment by stressing the advantage of city living versus traditional suburban single purpose developments. Having the ability to live, work, shop and dine within walkable distance reduces dependence on automobiles and enhances the desirability of living in Falls Church. We encourage planning and development which allows nearby residents to have the ability to walk to new retail establishments, thereby reducing their need for automobile trips.

We present comments on the Plan at this stage:

- 1) The City should carefully review the design elements of this proposed development to ensure that walking and biking to, from and within Area are the favored forms of transportation. Adequate bike racks need to be planned in advance. They should be located in numerous locations both within and on the perimeter of the project, as is the case at Bethesda Row. Pedestrian and bike crossings of Broad Street all need to be provided for. The City should continue to consider modifications to enhance the safety of bicyclists.
- 2) The project should include ample street trees, shrubs and plans. Bethesda Row features a number of street trees, which improve its appearance, provide shade, enhance stormwater mitigation and act as a safety buffer (along with shrubs) between pedestrians and cars.
- 3) We continue to urge the developer to plan for stormwater Best Management Practices should balance multiple objectives. Virginia's new stormwater regulations allow a range of actions to achieve required objectives for runoff quality and quantity. Green roofs, which offer multiple benefits, may be considered for some of the roof space, leaving a significant portion of the rooftop free for future photovoltaic systems, should conditions for these systems improves.
- 4) Energy efficient features and technologies should be integrated into the project's design to reduce wasted energy and lower the project's overall carbon footprint. Downward directional lighting should also be used to limit wasted energy and reduce light pollution. We believe that these

energy efficient features will become increasingly attractive to prospective residents and occupants. We recommend that the developers describe all plans relating to energy efficiency prior to final approval of special exceptions.

- 5) The project should include charging stations for electric vehicles. Placing them in visible and preferred locations would send a desirable message.
- 6) The Council should consider the installation of a stoplight at the intersection of Broad and North and South Oak Streets. Oak is a main thoroughfare from Route 50, and its intersection with Broad Street is much more heavily used than other crossings.

The ESC welcomes the opportunity to discuss the Plan further, if desired.

Sincerely yours,

Ray Arnaudo
Chair, Environmental Services Council

Cc: Chris McGough, ESC Staff Liaison