

Subject: Re: PLEASE RESPOND: 1201 S Joyce Street Site Plan Amendment
From: "Scott Miles, AHCA President" <president@aurorahighlands.org>
Date: 2/12/21, 4:36 PM
To: Olivia Sontag <osontag@arlingtonva.us>
CC: Carol Fuller <fullercarols@gmail.com>, "michaeljpickford@gmail.com" <michaeljpickford@gmail.com>, Christer Ahl <Christer.Ahl@comcast.net>, Robert Mandle <Rob@nationallanding.org>

Olivia,

Thank you for the change to speak last week. The following provides more detail on The Aurora Highlands Civic Association's general support for the proposed site plan changes, with the exception of the grocery modifications. I expect to send similar comments to the County Board next month, pending any changes before then.

I would like to express the concerns of Aurora Highlands residents about a potential loss of a full-service grocery store in the Westpost (formerly Pentagon Row) retail development and the unspecified streetscape details along Army-Navy Drive, as proposed in the Minor Site Plan Amendment to Site Plan #105-8.

The Applicant states the following in their Statement of Support:

- Specifically, regarding the existing grocery store, it is the Applicant's intent to maintain a grocery store element on the Property to serve community needs, but the Applicant is requesting flexibility in format, size, and location. (p.2)

Among the changes, the Applicant proposes revised text for retail conditions (p.3), striking specific requirements for a "full service grocery store" of 40-70k sf and "full service drug store" of 8-20k sf in favor of much softer and smaller requirements (new words in bold):

- 52. The developer agrees to provide a grocery store or similar retail use on the Property. The size and location of the grocery store or similar use shall be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator through the Administrative Change process.
- 53. The developer agrees to commercial reasonable efforts to maintain the grocery store on the Property. However, in lieu thereof, the owner agrees to include a grocery component in the retail tenants.
- 56. The developer agrees to construct architectural facade treatments to enhance its pedestrian appeal and street orientation along South Army Navy Drive through provision of wall articulation and/or store front window treatments as shown in the revised drawings dated December 11, 1997, or as approved as part of the final site development and landscape plan.

Our residents understand and support the Applicant's desire to have more flexible retail conditions that would support a greater variety of local retails, as described under 53. Specifically, we would welcome the office uses and day care options mentioned under #53, as well as a variety of spaces that could provide more support for locally owned small businesses.

However, we strongly recommend retaining the conditions requiring a full-service 40-70k sf grocery store somewhere in the development, rather than a smaller "grocery component." The Harris Teeter in Westpost currently provides this much needed one-stop service for our community, and it is conveniently located within a reasonable walk shed for the majority of 22202 residents, who live in the northeast quadrant. Even with other current and planned grocery options in the area, a large full-service grocer at this site remains an essential service.

The Livability22202 Framework vision encourages "Urban planning that balances working, living, and socializing in close proximity – creating a "City of Short Distances" – reduces unnecessary travel and forges community

connections. The Framework further states that "...access to goods and services becomes more livable for children, the elderly, and the less affluent. Public health and the environment both benefit from an emphasis on public transit and active modes of transportation, such as walking and biking." Providing essential services, such as a full-service grocery store, that are within a reasonable walking and/or biking distance helps create a truly livable community that promotes healthier people, healthier trees, and a healthier environment.

If the full-service grocery store is replaced by "grocery elements", shoppers may need to make multiple stops to purchase what they need, with some items no longer available. Residents may need to drive to full-service grocery stores outside of the community to meet their shopping needs. And those of us who are "car-free", for whatever reason, will no longer be able to purchase needed items in our locality.

Please also note that having a full-service grocery store in Westpost encourages local residents to walk to Westpost where we will see the new and exciting retail openings being developed, encouraging us to try out these new establishments.

A final note, please ensure any revision to #56 includes a requirement for a minimum 10' wide clear zone and 6' wide tree planting zone as the plans are developed. The AHCA would like to participate in this planning and review of the final details.

Scott Miles

President

Aurora Highlands Civic Association

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Olivia Sontag wrote on 2/5/21 11:46 AM:

Good morning,

On March 20, 2021, the County Board will consider a site plan amendment for SP #105 (location of Harris Teeter) located at 1201 S Joyce Street (RPC# #35-005-031). The applicant proposes changes to conditions 52, 53, 56, & 58 to allow greater flexibility for leasing and make it consistent with the 2015 Arlington Retail Plan. Most notably, they propose to strike the requirement for a "full-service grocery store" and "full-service drug store", changing it to a "grocery store or similar retail use" and removing the minimum/maximum size requirements. I have attached the applicant's Statement of Justification for additional details on the amendment request.

I understand the applicant has been conducting outreach with each of your associations. Please let me know if you have any comments, questions, or concerns about the proposal. We kindly request your input by Friday, February 12.

Olivia Sontag

Associate Planner

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