

1455 Research Boulevard
Statement of Justification
Site Plan Application (Level 2)

July 11, 2025

Updated: November 24, 2025 and March 5, 2026

I. Introduction

Pulte Home Company, LLC (the “Applicant”) is the contract purchaser of the property located at 1455 Research Boulevard (the “Property”) and is pursuing a phased Level 2 Site Plan to redevelop the Property from existing office use to a residential community containing townhomes, two-over-twos and multi-family condominium units, as explained in more detail below (the “Project”).

II. Property Description

The Property is zoned MXE and contains 463,154 square feet (10.6326 acres) of tract area and is identified as Parcel 1, National Capital Research Park as reflected on Plat No. 6390. The Property is currently improved with a 228,221 square foot office building constructed in 1998, located in the center of the Property, surrounded on all sides by a surface parking lot. There are two entrances to the Property located off of Research Boulevard, with two stormwater management ponds located in between the entrances.

The Property is surrounded by commercial uses, all located within the MXE Zone. To the north is a 173,408 square foot office building for Meso Scale Diagnostics (1711 Research Boulevard); to the west is a modestly sized office building (42,679 square feet) at 1450 Research Boulevard and the recently renovated office buildings located at 1500 and 1550 Research Boulevard containing just over 84,000 square feet; and to the south is the recently developed Research Row which is improved with almost 80,000 square feet of retail, restaurants and a health club and a 71,000 square foot office building. The closest residential area is a townhouse community located to the east across I-270.

III. Project Description

The Applicant is proposing the development of a residential community containing a total of 198 dwelling units, comprised of 78 townhomes, 56 two-over-two stacked units and two five-story (four stories of residential over parking podium) multi-family buildings each containing 32 units. The 15 percent moderately priced dwelling units (“MPDUs”) (30 units) will be distributed throughout the three product types – townhomes, stacked units and the multi-family buildings. All of the units will be for-sale. The plan is oriented around a “U” shaped (public) road system, with Street 1 and Street 2 running in an east-west direction connected by Street 3 running north-south along the eastern edge of the Property. Access to the Project from Research Boulevard is located at approximately the same location as the two existing access drives. Additional vehicular

circulation internal to the Property is provided by three “H” shaped alley systems. A green space buffer is proposed along Research Boulevard with a central green space spine extending east through the middle of the Property. The 92 foot wide transcontinental gas pipeline easement is located in the southeast corner of the Property over which no structure may be constructed. The multi-family buildings are located along the eastern property line and the required parking for these units is located in the ground floor parking level of each structure and by 10 parking spaces on the 27-space surface parking lot in the southeast corner of the Property. The two-over-two units are located along the southern portion of the Property between Street 2 and Alley 3 and along Street 3, across the public street from the multi-family structures. The townhomes are located on the balance of the Property and are concentrated in the center of the Property and along the northern boundary.

A total of 416 parking spaces is required and 447 spaces will be provided. Each townhouse and stacked unit will provide two on-site parking spaces. In addition, the proposed Project provides 83 guest parking spaces consisting of 21 on-street parking spaces, a surface lot containing 15 spaces located along the southern Property line, 17 spaces provided on the southeast surface lot, and the remaining 30 spaces provided in the driveways of the townhouses located along Research Boulevard and Street 1.

The entrance to the Project will include an entrance feature identifying the residential community.

The Project provides 33 percent green area (154,013 square feet), of which 5.8 percent (27,092 square feet), is designed as public use space. The green area includes the green buffer along Research Boulevard that ranges in width from 28 feet to 82 feet. This area will be improved with enhanced landscaping at the entrances, a large multi-purpose lawn, seating and public art. Additional green area includes the green central spine (providing a common gathering area), the linear park along the southern Property line and passive seating areas distributed throughout the residential community. The Project will continue to provide a pedestrian connection between the Property and the Research Row commercial site to the south.

The public streets are designed in accordance to the City’s standards with Streets 1 and 2 providing a 55-foot wide right-of-way and Street 3 providing a 62-foot wide right-of-way. The Applicant has filed a waiver request to obtain approval from the Mayor and Council for the 55 foot right-of-ways. Five foot wide sidewalks are provided on both sides of the public street system. The three alleys will be 20 feet in width.

The townhomes, two-over-two units, and the two multi-family buildings will have flat roofs that promote an urban aesthetic.

In accordance with the City’s Public Art requirements, the Applicant proposes public art in the green space along the frontage of the Property that will be visible from Research Boulevard and introduce visual interest to the area. The general location of the art will be determined prior to the Site Plan hearing with the Applicant determining the final design after the Site Plan hearing.

IV. Civil Engineering and Transportation

A Natural Resources Inventory (“NRI”) was submitted on April 1, 2025 and approved on April 29, 2025 (No. 2025-21-NRI). Forest Conservation requirements will be met primarily with a fee-in-lieu payment, with a limited amount of forest conservation provided on site.

The approved Pre-Application stormwater management concept letter is included as part of the Site Plan application and shows that stormwater will be addressed with two underground storage facilities designed to address water quantity located along the Research Boulevard frontage of the Property and under Alley 3. On-site water quality will be addressed with micro bio planters and facilities located throughout the Project.

The Property is currently served by adequate public facilities, including public water, sewer service and electricity and no upgrades are needed to these facilities to service the proposed use.

In terms of traffic generation, the existing office use generates 330 AM and 319 PM peak hour trips. The Project will result in a significant reduction in the number of overall trips. The Project will generate 69 percent less AM peak hour trips and 62 percent less PM peak hour trips (i.e. 228 fewer AM trips and 298 fewer PM trips) than the existing commercial development. The Applicant submitted a Scoping Intake Form on January 14, 2025. Given that the Project will result in a reduced number of AM and PM trips, no additional transportation analysis is required.

V. City of Rockville 2021 Comprehensive Master Plan

The Property is located in the southern portion of Planning Area 15, Fallsgrove and Research Boulevard and is designated Office (“O”) on the Land Use Policy Map. There are no specific project designations or recommendations for the Property. While the Comprehensive Plan provides that the Research Boulevard corridor should remain focused on employment-generating office and commercial uses, the overall goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan support residential development, including:

- Foster sufficient market rate housing (page 193)
- Promote diversity in the supply of housing (page 198)

The designation of the Property as Office appears to be more of a reflection of the existing land use of the Property at the time of the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan than an analysis of the land use patterns. Moreover, the need for suburban office space decreased dramatically since 2020 and is not expected to rebound. This is especially apparent in areas, such as the subject Property, where the office building has reached the end of its useful life. At the same time, the demand for housing continues to increase. The redevelopment of the Property to accommodate housing will help support the Research Row commercial center, which while designated OCRM (office, commercial, residential mix), is exclusively office and commercial. The addition of housing on the Property ensures that the mixed use goal identified by the Comprehensive Plan for this southern portion of Research Boulevard may be achieved. Moreover, as provided for in Zoning Code Section 25.13.07.c.6., the Planning Commission may approve residential uses on a

MXE zoned site without a Comprehensive Plan recommendation for residential, provided the development is compatible with the adjoining and confronting uses.

VI. Compliance with the Mixed-Use Employment (MXE) Zone Development Standards

The Project will conform to the current development standards of the MXE Zone, including the development standards set forth in Section 25.13.05, the additional design guidelines of Section 25.13.06, and the special design regulations of Section 25.13.07 for mixed use zones.

A. Section 25.13.05 – Development Standards

1. Subsection 25.13.05a – Build to Line

Not applicable.

2. Subsection 25.13.05b – Development Standards

a. Subsection 25.13.05b(1)

The Project complies with the applicable development standards for the MXE Zone set forth in Section 25.13.05.b:

	Required/Permitted	Proposed
Maximum Height (in feet)	120'	Condo Flats: 75' Two-Over-Twos: 55' Townhomes: 52'
Total Open Area Required	20% (92,643 SF)	33% (154,013 SF)
Public Use Space Required w/in Open Area	5% (23,161 SF)	5.8% (27,092 SF)
Minimum width at frontline	10'	>10'
Setbacks Abutting Public Right-of-Way	None, 10' min. if provided	0'
Side Setback Abutting Non-Residential Land	None; 10' min. if provided	0'
Rear Setback Abutting Non-Residential Land	None; 10' min. if provided	0'

b. Subsection 25.13.05b.2

Subsections (a) through (d) pertain to other zones and are not applicable to the MXE Zone. With respect to subsection (e), based on the surrounding uses, the layback slope requirements are not applicable.

c. *Subsection 25.13.05b.c*

1. *Conversion of space (Areas of a building originally designed for commercial or office use are encouraged to be designed to accommodate the conversion of the space to residential uses.)*

N/A. The Project is wholly residential.

2. *Entryways (Areas of a building originally designed for residential use at the ground floor level, having individual entries to the units, should have the entry from the ground level raised at least two (2) feet, or have another form of demarcation between the public sidewalk and the private entry. In order to be readily convertible to retail space, such areas must have a minimum ceiling height of fifteen (15) feet.)*

The entries of the majority of the townhouses will be raised at least two feet.¹ The entries of the remaining townhouses, two-over-twos and multi-family units will be demarcated from the public sidewalk with lead walks that result in a clear delineation between the public and private realms. The entire Project is designed for residences and given the location and the layout of the Project, as well as the design of the units, the conversion of the Project to accommodate any non-residential use is improbable. Accordingly, the Project does not provide for first floor ceiling heights of 15 feet.

3. *Access (Areas of a building intended for non-residential uses must not have any access to areas of the building used for residential purposes.)*

N/A. Project is wholly residential.

4. *MPDU Compliance (Residential development must comply with MPDU requirements.)*

The Project will provide the required 15 percent MPDUs. Based on 198 units, 30 MPDUs will be provided.

5. *Public Use Space (Must be provided consistent with Section 25.17.01)*

The Project will exceed the 5 percent public use space requirement by providing 5.8 percent public use space.

6. *Floor area limitation*

N/A. The Project is wholly residential.

¹ In order to comply with ADA requirements, the elevation of the entrance of the multi-family buildings must be comparable to the ground level elevation.

B. Section 25.13.06 – Additional Design Guidelines

The proposed development is located in one of the City’s mixed use zones and thus the Project is subject to the additional design guidelines of subsection 25.13.06. Analysis of compliance with applicable additional design guidelines is provided below:

a. Purpose

The Project represents high quality development that is consistent with the intent and purpose of the additional design guidelines for mixed use zones.

b. Aesthetic and visual characteristics for all zones.

1. Facades and exterior walls including sides and backs.

The Project proposes high-quality design at an appropriate context-sensitive scale for the surrounding community. Specifically, front elevations for the townhouses and two-over-twos feature multiple points of architectural fenestration, articulation through roof line modulation and stepbacks, and variation of building materials and colors. In combination, these façade design techniques provide visual interest and promote compatibility. The five-story modestly sized multi-buildings will include a two story base of masonry material and three stories of a differentiating masonry above. The front facades will include six bays that are separated by inboard balconies that clearly define each bay and break up the mass of the buildings.

2. Roofs.

The Zoning Ordinance calls for roof variation to add interest to and reduce the massive scale of “large buildings.” While none of the Project’s structures qualify as a large building, all of the structures will provide roof variation. The townhomes and two-over-two units provide subtle variations in their height to add visual interest to each “stick” of units. The multi-family buildings will include flat roofs which will read as varied roof lines due to differentiating bays.

3. Materials and color.

The townhouses and two-over-twos incorporate a combination of masonry and siding with a context-sensitive palette. The elevations will include a varied rich earth tone color palate allowing each townhouse and two-over-two to read as a separate unit. The multi-family building will include a one-story base of one masonry type material with three floors of a different masonry material. The top floor will then repeat the treatment of the base. The Project is surrounded by commercial uses and thus there is not an established residential design aesthetic.

4. Items not allowed facing a public street.

This provision is not applicable to single unit attached dwellings in a mixed-use zone.

5. *Entryways.*

This provision is applicable to nonresidential uses and customer entrances. As a residential development, the Project does not incorporate customer entrances.

6. *Screening of mechanical equipment.*

The air conditioning units of the front loaded townhouse units will be located in the rear yards and the units for the rear loaded townhouse units and the two-over-twos will be located between the driveways. The two-over-two units will also have utility closets at the end of each row that will provide a water and electrical closet. The mechanical equipment for the multi-family buildings will be located on the roof of each building.

c. *Site design and relationship to surrounding community.*

1. *Vehicular access.*

This requirement pertains to projects that are adjacent to other residential uses, and therefore is not applicable to the Project.

2. *Buffers.*

This requirement requires visual and noise buffers to nearby residential uses. Given that there are no surrounding residential uses, this provision is not applicable.

3. *Outdoor sales and storage.*

As a residential development, the Project does not propose outdoor sales or storage of products.

4. *Trash recycling, waste oil/grease collection area.*

The townhouse and two-over-two garages are designed with sufficient room to store the trash and recycling bins within the garages. Trash and recycling pick up will occur along the front of the street in the case of the front loaded townhouses and two-over-twos and in the alleys of the other units. The trash and recycling for the multi-family units will be collected in dumpsters located within the ground floor parking level of each building and will be rolled outside for trash pickup.

5. *Parking lots and structures.*

The townhouses and two-over-twos will each provide two parking spaces for the residents. The townhouses will include two car garages whereas the two-over-twos will provide a one car garage and an additional parking space in the driveway. The multi-family buildings will provide parking for the residents in the ground level parking structures and the adjacent surface lot to provide the required 96 parking spaces. In addition, guest parking will be provided in the 53 additional parking spaces on-street, in the surface parking lot along the southern Property line, and in the townhouse driveways located on Street 1 and along Research Boulevard.

6. Pedestrian and bicycle flows.

The Project will provide five foot wide sidewalks along both sides of the internal public streets. In addition, a pedestrian connection to the commercial Research Row development to the south will be provided to facilitate pedestrian movement between these two parcels and to foster walkability. Along Research Boulevard, an 8-foot wide landscape buffer measured from back of curb and a 10-foot wide shared use path will be provided. The Applicant will be dedicating a portion of the Research Boulevard frontage in order to accommodate the shared use path and associated improvements.

7. Central features and community spaces.

The Project proposes attractive and inviting pedestrian-scale features, spaces, and amenities. In total, the Project will provide 154,013 square feet of open area (33 percent) – including almost an acre of public use space (27,092 square feet or 5.8 percent). The public use space will be located along the central spine running east-west and intersecting with Research Boulevard and along the Research Boulevard frontage of the Property. Additional open space will be provided in the linear park along the southern Property line and in open areas distributed throughout the Property.

8. Delivery and loading spaces, hours of operation.

The only loading needs for the multi-family buildings will be to accommodate move-ins and move-outs. Given that the buildings will be ownership units, it is anticipated that this activity will be limited after the initial sale of the units. Loading for the multi-family buildings will be provided in an additional space near the garage entry, in the alleyway near the garage entry and in the overflow parking lot located in the southeast corner of the site, adjacent to the southern building.

9. Ancillary uses.

No ancillary uses are proposed.

10. Noise abatement.

The Project is proposed in conformance with the noise regulations set forth in Chapter 31B of the Montgomery County Code.

The Project was carefully designed to minimize the noise impacts from I-270. Most importantly, all of the required public use space is located in areas experiencing less than 65 dBAs. While there are several additional open areas in excess of the 5 percent public use space requirement that are located in areas that experience noise levels in excess of 65 dBA when calculated on a 24-hour period, the actual noise level anticipated when these areas will be in use is considerably lower (a good portion is below 65 dBA and the remaining areas, but for one small area is in the 65 to 70 dBA level). The higher 24-hour noise levels are attributable primarily to the traffic noise generated between 5:00 and 7:00 a.m. when few, if any, residents or visitors are

experiencing the outdoor areas. The noise levels decrease significantly when studied during the period of 7:00 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Recognizing that higher noise levels occur toward the southeast portion of the Property, the layout prioritizes the placement of public and private open spaces in areas with lower noise exposure. The multi-family buildings were strategically located along the eastern boundary of the Property to serve as an effective sound wall. Originally, the multi-family buildings were larger, 36-unit buildings, but in order to comply with interior noise level requirements, the buildings were reduced in size to 32-unit buildings and relocated further away from I-270. The main public use space, located along the Research Boulevard frontage, provides a generous half-acre open lawn designed for public use and community gathering. The Mews Area is a private, resident-focused space that is acoustically insulated from excessive noise and provides approximately a quarter-acre of gathering area with a variety of passive seating options.

In addition to the front lawn and mews, three additional amenity spaces are integrated throughout the Project. The linear park strengthens pedestrian connections to the adjacent site to the south and lies within the 65-75 dBA range. The passive seating area located between the multi-family buildings and the 24-foot front-loaded townhomes, provides a smaller gathering nook with seating opportunities, primarily within the 65-70 dBA range. And, the passive connection located at the southeast portion of the Property will feature high-quality pavers, a trellis structure, mailboxes, and seating and falls within the 75-80 dBA range. Overall, the hierarchy of open spaces aligns with the Property's noise contours, with the most desirable and active amenity areas located in the lowest noise environments along Research Boulevard.

A significant challenge associated with the Property is the presence of the 92 foot wide Transcontinental Gas Pipeline easement in the southeast corner of the Property which runs in a northeast to southwest direction and extends under I-270. Pursuant to the Transcontinental Gas Pipeline Right-of-Way Agreement recorded among the Land Records of Montgomery County at Liber 2890, folio 186, no structures or trees are permitted within the easement area. As a result, the southern third of the eastern Property line is exposed to I-270. In an effort to counteract this, the landscaping plan for the Project places trees where possible to provide a positive visual experience and distract the senses from the generated noise.

11. Outdoor lighting.

Outdoor lighting will include streetlights along the public streets; bollard lighting along the north-south sidewalk that bisects the Property; lighting in the amenity spaces; and light poles in the southeast corner parking lot. Wall mounted sconces will be provided on the front and back of the two-over-twos and supplemental lighting will be added to the multi-family buildings. The lighting will conform with the City's landscaping, screening, and lighting manual.

12. Landscaping.

The Project's landscaping is proposed in conformance with the City's Landscaping, Screening, and Lighting Manual, with the exception that as permitted by the Manual, the Applicant seeks a waiver from the Perimeter Landscaping Requirement for Parking requirements

due to the presence of the Transcontinental Gas Pipeline easement. The Waiver Request is submitted as part of the Site Plan application.

In accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 25.21.21, the Project provides one street tree every 40 feet along the public streets. While the spacing pattern for the trees in some areas is not precisely 40 feet due to water and sewer connections, storm drain pipes, utility meters and street lighting infrastructure, the number of overall required trees is provided and there are no areas with a notable gap in the street trees.

Significantly, the overall number of proposed trees on the Property that will potentially qualify as significant trees is double the amount of existing trees on the Property.

C. 25.13.07c - Special Design Regulations for MXE Zone

1. *Building location*

There is no build-to line provided in the Comprehensive Plan.

2. *Uses by floor*

The Project is entirely residential.

3. *Façade*

The Zoning Ordinance provides that “building facades taller than thirty-five (35) feet should generally include an expression line at the first floor level and a defined cornice line at the top of the façade wall. These recommendations are not intend to apply to townhouses and two-over-twos. With respect to the multi-family buildings, the two-story base serves as an expression line and each of the bays includes a cornice line.

4. *Sidewalks*

Zoning Ordinance Section 25.17.05.b.2 governing sidewalks generally provides that in the mixed use zones, sidewalks should be provided pursuant to Chapter 13. Chapter 13 (Section 25.13.06.c.6.) pertaining to pedestrian and bicycle flows in the mixed use zones does not provide a specific width for public sidewalks in the MXE Zone but instead provides that each site must provide for pedestrian accessibility, safety, and convenience to reduce traffic impacts and enable the development of the project. This section does provide for a width of 6 feet for sidewalks connecting the public sidewalks to the principal *customer* entrance, suggesting that a width of 6 feet should be provided in connection with access to commercial uses. Given the heavier amounts of pedestrian traffic associated with commercial uses, a width of 6 feet is appropriate. However, given that the Project is exclusively residential, this provision is not applicable. Accordingly, the Applicant proposes sidewalks with a width of five feet throughout the Project, pursuant to the Standards and Details for Construction Manual. Five foot wide sidewalks are more than sufficient to accommodate the anticipated pedestrian traffic and at the same time, allow for more green space while reducing the overall total amount of impervious area on the Property, which helps to reduce runoff and is therefore beneficial from a stormwater management perspective.

Along Research Boulevard, the shared use path will be 10 feet wide.

5. Parking

Parking is provided in the garages of the individual townhouse and two-over-two units. The majority of these units, with the exception of the townhouses located along Street 1, are rear loaded units. Parking for the multi-family buildings will be provided in the enclosed first level parking garage or in the surface parking lot provided in the southeast corner of the Property. In addition, a total of 83 additional guest parking spaces will be provided on-street, in certain townhouse driveways and in a portion of the surface parking lot along the southern portion of the Property. Of the 27 spaces provided in the surface lot, 10 spaces will be demarcated and specifically dedicated to use by the multi-family residents and subject to an off-site parking agreement pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 25.16.03.j.1. to be executed prior to the issuance of the first Use and Occupancy permit for the multi-family building.

D. 25.16.07.d – Parking Structure Design

Zoning Ordinance Section 25.16.07.d. provides that where a parking structure confronts residential development, the design must not allow headlights to shine through the structure. The parking for the multi-family is provided on the first floor of the building with a façade consisting of a brick base ranging in height of between two feet and six feet. Above the base are openings that read as windows that are required for ventilation. In addition, this side of the condo flat is the tandem parking side where the car being used the least will be blocking the headlights of the car being used more often behind it. Car headlights will not be a nuisance to the units across the street. Further, the landscaping to be provided in front of the multi-family buildings and in front of the two-over-two units will provide effective screening for the headlights. Because of the orientation of the building such that the eastern façade of the ground level of the building serves as a retaining wall (and thus cannot provide any openings) the openings along the western façade are mandatory.

VII. Adequate Public Facilities

There are adequate public facilities with respect to transportation, fire and rescue, and water and sewer to accommodate the proposed Project. The Property is served by the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department located at 380 Hungerford Drive that is 2.1 miles away and Montgomery County Fire Station 32 located at 9615 Darnestown Road, 1.3 miles away. The closest Rockville police station is located within 1.7 miles away at 2 West Montgomery Avenue. There are adequate public facilities with respect to transportation, schools, fire and rescue, and water and sewer to accommodate the proposed Project. Based on the Montgomery County student generation rates, the Project will generate 36 elementary school students (Ritchie Park), 19 middle school student (Julius West), and 27 high school students (Richard Montgomery).

VIII. Findings

The Project satisfies the required Site Plan findings set forth in Section 25.07.01 of the Zoning Ordinance in that the Project will not:

A. Adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed development

The Project will not adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood. Currently, there are no other residential uses in the neighborhood. The existing office use is currently 57 percent vacant and as a result of the ever decreasing demand for suburban office space, continued commercial use of the Property is not viable. The introduction of needed residential uses on the Property will help support the commercial retail uses at Research Row, thus strengthening the viability of this Property. The use will generate less trips than the office use, ensuring that the Project will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding roadways.

B. Be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood

The proposed residential Project will in no way be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood. As noted, the Project will enhance the value of the adjacent retail uses at Research Row. The well-designed residential project with ownership opportunities at various price points will help address the City's and the region's housing shortage.

C. Overburden existing and programmed public facilities as set forth in Article 20 of this Chapter and as provided in the adopted Adequate Public Facilities Standards

The existing utilities, including water, sewer and electricity are adequate to accommodate the proposed Project. In addition, there is sufficient police, fire and emergency services in proximity to the Property to ensure a prompt response time to the Project in the event of an emergency. The Project represents a decrease in the number of peak hour trips, with 228 fewer AM peak hour trips and 298 fewer PM peak hour trips. There is adequate available capacity at Ritchie Park Elementary School, Julius West Middle School and Richard Montgomery High School to accommodate the students expected to be generated by the development.

D. Adversely affect the natural resources or environment of the City or surrounding areas

The Project is the redevelopment of an existing commercial site, with 7.32 acres of the 10.63 acre Property currently being impervious. The Project will include a modest decrease in the impervious area of almost 14,000 square feet and will introduce updated stormwater management to the Property. The proposed development will remove the existing stormwater management pond and replace it with two underground stormwater management facilities to address quantity control. Water quality will be addressed with micro-bioretenion facilities and planters provided throughout the Project. Forest conservation will be addressed primarily with a fee-in-lieu payment.

E. Be in conflict with the Plan

As discussed above, the Project addresses one of the City's overarching goals which is the provision of additional housing, thereby furthering the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives. The Project will provide 31 MPDUs, thereby helping to address the need for affordable housing.

F. Constitute a violation of any provision of this Chapter or other applicable law

The proposed Project complies with the provisions and laws of Rockville governing the development of the Property. As detailed earlier in this Statement, the Project complies with all of the MXE development standards. The Project will comply with the City's Green Building Standards and the applicable International Green Construction Code. The Project will also comply with the City's Art in Private Development Ordinance by providing public art on-site as permitted by the Art in Private Development Ordinance. Finally, as previously described, the Project will satisfy the City's Forest Conservation requirements primarily with a fee-in-lieu payment.

G. Be incompatible with the surrounding uses or property

The Project will be compatible with the surrounding MXE zoned properties. The Project introduces residential uses to this MXE zoned area, thereby furthering the mixed use objectives of the Zone. The two multi-family buildings will be located along the eastern boundary adjacent to I-270 and the space between the property line and the buildings will be enhanced with additional trees. The combination of residential buildings and trees will provide a positive visual experience for travelers along adjacent I-270. The northern property line will be lined with front loaded townhouses with the townhouse lots located within five feet of the Property line and the forest conservation area to the north located on the office building site at 1500 Research Boulevard. The Applicant will install Forest Conservation Easement signs every 50 feet along the Property edge to notify the townhouse owners of the restrictions associated with this area. In addition, in order to allow access to the rear of the townhouse lots, no planting is proposed within the five foot green strip behind the lots and the Property line in order to allow for rear lot access. Given the heavily wooded area associated with the Forest Conservation Easement area, the townhouses along the northern property line are compatible with the adjacent use to the north. Along the eastern Property line, the landscaping has been enhanced to include a mix of evergreen and shade trees to provide a visual buffer from and to I-270. The townhouses along the southern portion of the site will be buffered from the commercial parking lot to the south by a linear park that will include landscaping and a seating area. A mix of evergreen and shade trees will be provided in this area to provide a visual buffer, along the edges of the area outside the transcontinental gas easement. To the extent permitted, non-woody plants will be planted within the easement area with the plans including the following note: "Planting within the gas easement may be limited; any proposed vegetation should be non-woody and subject to coordination and approval by the gas company." The inclusion of the additional trees outside the easement area and the non-woody plantings within the easement (assuming permissible), will ensure that the Property is compatible with the area to the south. The Project is designed to include three sticks of townhouses along the Research Boulevard frontage to help frame the street and is in keeping with current urban design principles in that it will help to reduce vehicular speeds along Research Boulevard. The introduction of the

public use space along the western frontage of the Property will provide an interesting visual element and will introduce a softening element to Research Boulevard.

IX. Community Outreach

In accordance with the City's requirements, the Applicant held a Pre-Application Meeting ("PAM") on December 17, 2024. Details of this meeting, including meeting minutes, were submitted as part of the PAM application. The Applicant will conduct its post Site Plan submission meeting following the acceptance of the subject Site Plan application.

X. Conclusion

The proposed Site Plan provides an opportunity to convert an underutilized commercial property consisting of an office building surrounded by a sea of parking with modestly scaled, for-sale residential development, thus providing the City with needed housing to help address the City's housing shortage.

For the reasons stated throughout this Application, we encourage the City's approval of this Level 2 Site Plan.