

6 January 2026

Members of the Alexandria Planning Commission,

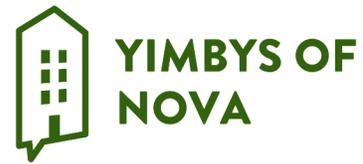
As the Alexandria leadership team for YIMBYs of Northern Virginia, we are excited to see two significant housing developments on today's docket, in addition to three subdivisions and a Zoning Text Amendment that is a step in the right direction towards streamlining the process for office-to-residential conversions, and we ask you to vote yes on all of them. Together, these developments will add 31 desperately needed new homes to Alexandria. Lastly, we'd like to share our perspective on the proposed Green Building Plan.

Docket item 6, 220 and 224 S Peyton Street, will replace a small surface parking lot with eight homes close to the King Street Metro station. The development will also benefit its neighbors with improved sidewalks and new street trees. We would like to note that you are again being asked to approve a parking reduction within a quarter mile of a Metro station in one of our city's most walkable areas. We hope you will legalize parking flexibility to make it easier to build homes like these, in locations where residents have choices in how to get around.

Docket item 7, 732 N Washington and 710 Madison, will convert a 1960s office building in Old Town North to twenty homes. In addition to the fact that a parking reduction is again required for a development within a half mile of a Metro station, we'd like to note that a Special Use Permit is required to build a residential building in the CRMU-X zone. A residential building in a residential zone should not be considered a special use. We hope you will consider removing this requirement, and more broadly, simplifying our zones so that housing is legal everywhere in Alexandria. Lastly, we'd like to comment on the map in the staff report showing that this development will be the sixth height increase to the Old Town North Small Area Plan, which is less than ten years old. We hope this will inform height limits that are appropriate for the housing our city needs in future planning processes, including the Duke Street plan.

Docket item 8, the zoning text amendment, is a step in the right direction towards simplifying the approval process for office-to-residential conversions. We enthusiastically support formalizing staff's interpretation to allow existing noncomplying buildings to convert to residential use. The new SUP process is a step in the right direction towards streamlining the regulatory complexity around office-to-residential conversions. We hope you will approve the proposed amendment, and then make further changes to our zoning code to allow more office-to-residential conversions to be approved by-right rather than requiring City Council approval for an SUP. This could include increasing residential FAR limits to match commercial limits in zones where they are not equal, and exempting office-to-residential conversions from requirements like open space and setbacks that do not apply to the existing office building.

Lastly, we'd like to share our thoughts on Docket Item 9, the proposed Green Building Plan. We unfortunately missed the initial public engagement last year, and we wish we had a clearer understanding of how the cost for building housing compares to the current policy. If the proposed policy will lower the cost of building homes as compared to the current policy in virtually all cases, then



we enthusiastically support it. If there are cases where it would increase the cost of building homes, then we urge caution and consideration of how the cost of important environmental requirements can be offset to ensure projects remain feasible in Alexandria itself. Any policy that aims to make buildings in Alexandria more sustainable must also acknowledge that any multifamily housing building within the City of Alexandria is inherently sustainable compared to the alternative. When a project cannot be built affordably in Alexandria it does not simply stop existing; that demand of housing is instead fulfilled elsewhere. This drives regional housing sprawl, increasing emissions as more people are forced to live in jurisdictions that are both A) more car-reliant and B) do not require projects to be built as sustainably. Reducing "Alexandria's" greenhouse gas emissions by displacing them into Fairfax or Prince William Counties is not a good solution. We are particularly concerned by the projected high costs for multifamily low-rise buildings, which the plan estimates at \$10 per square foot. More care should be given to reducing the costs of or allowing more leeway for this housing type.

In addition to that broader consideration, we suggest two specific changes to the Plan:

- 1) The plan mandates a certain percentage of required parking spaces be compatible for electric vehicles. The plan should instead: A) call for the elimination of parking mandates, since mandating more parking spaces than people actually need is bad for the environment, and B) shift how EV spaces are required by applying the percent to a project's number of *built* parking spaces rather than the *mandated* spaces. This disentangles the Green Building Plan from the current parking mandate policy, and also avoids penalizing developers for seeking a parking reduction.
- 2) The plan exempts buildings "under 25,000 square feet or with 4 or fewer units." By exempting the most inherently costly and least inherently sustainable form of housing (large single-family homes) while layering requirements on the most naturally affordable ones (multifamily, especially low rise), this creates a perverse incentive that will further encourage builders to focus on luxury houses. It is our understanding that all buildings over 3,000 square feet require a DSP, in theory allowing them to be subjected to this plan. Every single family home in Alexandria over 3,000 square feet costs at least \$1 million. It seems fair to apply higher standards to these luxury homes, and balance this by easing restrictions on the most-impacted and more affordable typologies.

We hope Alexandria will continue to welcome new homes of all types, all price points, and in all parts of our city to address our regional housing crisis and make our city better for everyone.

Phoebe Coy, Alex Goyette, Peter Sutherland, Stephanie Elms and Yasir Nagi
YIMBYs of Northern Virginia Alexandria leads

January 5, 2026

RE: PUBLIC COMMENTS Submitted by 9 property owners and neighbors
Development Special Use Permit #2025-10030
220 & 224 South Peyton Street
Applicant: Windmill Hill LLC. represented by Lauren Riley, Attorney

Dear Alexandria Planning Commission:

We are writing as neighbors and property owners adjacent to the proposed development to offer our comments for the public record. Our intention is to work collaboratively to ensure any new development is a responsible addition to our shared community.

If the Development is approved with a reduction in parking requirements, it must be on the condition that all units in the development are barred from obtaining permits to park on surrounding public streets to prevent overcrowding of neighborhood curb space. This aligns with the Staff Report on Page 12, which notes that staff will bring a proposal to fully exclude this property and its future residents from the District 4 boundaries. We support this as one of the Planning Commission conditions of approval to manage existing parking constraints effectively.

We wish to bring the following material considerations to the Commission's attention, supported by information provided in attached Appendices A, B and C:

Community and Safety Considerations

Emergency Vehicle Access – The existing parking lot provides a critical secondary ingress and egress for first responders, functioning as an emergency access passthrough at the end of Commerce Street's long cul-de-sac. Eliminating this access could create a significant safety hazard for all residents in the event of a primary entrance blockage. We kindly request confirmation from Alexandria City staff regarding the status of any potential Emergency Vehicle Easement on this lot, given the existence of drivable curbs on both Peyton and Commerce Streets.

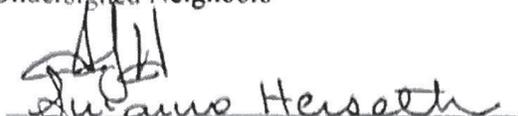
Fire Apparatus Turnaround Radius – The Commerce Street cul-de-sac currently lacks the necessary turnaround radius for large emergency apparatus as required by the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code and City of Alexandria Fire Prevention Code. Any development must ensure compliance with these safety standards, as dead-end easements over 100 feet require an approved area for turning around fire apparatus.

Parking and Congestion

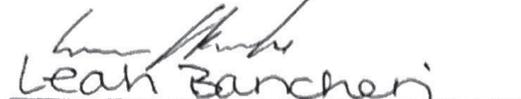
Parking Requirements – Commerce Street is already a narrow cul-de-sac experiencing heavy congestion from limited existing parking, local business traffic (listed in Appendix C), and the parents driving their children to/from the Blue Bird Day Care and Day School at the end of the cul-de-sac. Granting a reduction in parking requirements for this new development would likely exacerbate these existing congestion issues, impacting the quality of life for current residents.

We offer these comments in a spirit of community safety and responsible planning, and hope the Commission will take them into full consideration.

Sincerely,
Undersigned Neighbors


Name(s): Andrew & Suzanne Herseth
Address: 336 Commerce Street


Name(s): Karen S. Griffin
Address: 328 Commerce Street


Name(s): Cameron Steele, Leah Bancheri
Address: 338 Commerce St

Tim & Catherine Kelly
Name(s): Timothy & Catherine Kelly
Address: 332 Commerce Street


Name(s): Polly & Bruce Saul
Address: 330 Commerce Street

Name(s):
Address:

APPENDIX A

Pictures of Area



APPENDIX B

Resource List

Comment 1:

2024 NFPA 1141: Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development: This standard outlines the fundamental requirements for emergency access, including the necessity for secondary access points in developments where a single point of entry could be blocked.

2021 International Fire Code (IFC) Appendix D: Provides specific dimensional requirements for fire apparatus access roads, stipulating that dead-end roads exceeding 150 feet must have an approved turnaround and that over-length cul-de-sacs (typically those over 750 feet) require special approval or secondary access.

FEMA Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101: Offers guidelines on developing risk-informed emergency operations plans, emphasizing that unimpeded ingress and egress are critical for effective disaster response and evacuation.

NFPA 1: Fire Code Section 18.2.3.4: Sets the national baseline for "Access to Structures and Areas," explicitly requiring that fire department access roads be provided for every building to ensure no portion is more than 150 feet from a road.

OSHA 29 CFR 1910.38: Governs emergency action plans, highlighting that blocked egress or the removal of designated emergency exits can lead to "deadly consequences" and significant legal liability.

Comment 2:

City of Alexandria Fire Prevention Code

<https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/localmotion/info/gettingaround/4---roadways-online.pdf>

Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (VSFPC):

The VSFPC (which incorporates parts of the International Fire Code) focuses on the physical ability of fire apparatus to reach structures and turn around safely.

Turnaround Requirement: Any dead-end fire apparatus access road exceeding 150 feet in length must be provided with an approved turnaround area.

Turnaround Dimensions: Approved cul-de-sac bulbs must generally provide at least a 90-foot diameter to accommodate modern fire trucks.

Access Distance: A road is non-compliant if it does not extend to within 150 feet of all portions of the building's exterior walls, unless the building is fully sprinklered.

APPENDIX C

Area businesses that add to traffic on Commerce Street

- 1) LandDesign, Inc. (200 S. Peyton Street)
- 2) APCO International (1426 Prince Street)
- 3) Five businesses at 1420 Prince Street:
 - Austin & Elkins (Suite 101)
 - The Genius Genus & The Unleashed Pet (Suite 102)
 - Shining Light Media,LLC (Suite 200)
 - Gracie's Vision Healthcare (Suite 201)
 - Nails by Masumi (Suite 202)
- 4) Eye Level Alexandria - Tutoring (1414 Prince Street)
- 5) Back to Health Center (1414 Prince Street, Suite 100)
- 6) New Spa Business (333 Commerce Street)

From: [Zack DesJardins](#)
To: [PlanComm](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Support for DSUP 2025-10030
Date: Monday, January 5, 2026 11:36:12 PM

You don't often get email from zacharydejjardins@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Planning Commissioners,

For the past several years, I deliver my kids to daycare adjacent to this property, even occasionally surreptitiously using the parking lot proposed to be removed. I support the project, especially its lack of parking as so few are built this way. Its construction will be a source of interest by many pre-schoolers as well.

For the bicycle parking room, requiring all bicycles to be locked vertically will severely limit the appeal of the room per the statement that "For tenants with bicycles, they will have access to a vertical bike storage room inside the building." Many newer electric bikes are heavy and difficult to lift onto a vertical rack. I have yet to find a vertical rack that allows users to securely lock their bicycles to it. When I worked at an office with a bicycle room with vertical only racks, none were used and instead, all of us bike commuters had to bring our bikes in the elevator to the office itself. It is not clear that the city's required 30% of floor based racks is being followed ([page 7](#)) even though the staff report states that they will comply.

Zack DesJardins

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From: [Todd Perry](#)
To: [PlanComm](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Resident support for docket items 6 and 7 in today's meeting
Date: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 7:58:05 AM

[You don't often get email from toddperry99@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Good morning,

My name is Todd Perry, and I am a renter in Old Town. I am writing to show my support for docket items 6 and 7 in today's meeting. Our rent is way too high and any additional housing will help stabilize rents long term.

Thank you,

Todd Perry
Sent from my iPhone

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From: [Leah Elizabeth Bancheri](#)
To: [PlanComm](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Concern for SUP #2025-10030 From Neighbor
Date: Sunday, January 4, 2026 11:49:18 AM

You don't often get email from leahbancheri@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good morning—

As a current resident of 338 Commerce Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, a former BAR intern, and a former member of the Beautification Commission, I feel compelled to comment on SUP #2025-10030 for the proposed development on S. Peyton Street.

My primary concern is the lack of two-bedroom units in this proposal. Developments composed almost entirely of small units risk becoming investment properties for the wealthy or de facto short-term rentals rather than long-term homes. Look at the Prince Street Inn for example (https://maps.app.goo.gl/LCTQNjd5saBnHUXQA?g_st=ic). I cannot afford to purchase a home on my own street, and I would welcome the opportunity to remain in Alexandria as a homeowner rather than a lifelong lessee. It is disheartening to see continued development approved while residents who are deeply invested in this city are increasingly priced out.

Given the unit mix, it appears likely that this building will function as a short-term rental property. If that is the intended use, it would be more transparent and appropriate for the developer to pursue a hotel proposal rather than housing that does not meaningfully serve Alexandria residents.

Second, while I support public transportation and smart growth, I am concerned that the already limited on-street parking in this area will become even more strained as a result of this development.

To be clear, I want to see this underutilized parking lot redeveloped. However, I also want to see development that is meaningful, honest in its intent, and aligned with the goal of supporting long-term residents—not housing that is effectively a hotel in disguise.

Lastly, while development on this block is good, there is still an abandoned home next to me. 340 Commerce. Would appreciate an update on this....

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Leah Bancheri
Alexandria, VA

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