

530 First Street, Alexandria - Edens proposal

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Carlos Cecchi <ccecchi@idigroup.com>

Mon 2/29/2016 5:02 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Dear Planning Commission members:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Edens proposal, which will anchor the north Old Town neighborhood with a vibrant mixed-use development containing significant ground floor retail and activated sidewalks. This is a block that is currently characterized by large surface parking lots, no aesthetic appeal for the neighborhood and a “dead” pedestrian experience. In contrast, the Edens proposal will introduce a vibrant streetscape with high-quality buildings that fit in with the mass and scale of many of the nearby existing buildings. In particular the proposed internal loading dock is a big improvement over the very visible loading condition along N. Pitt Street during the Giant grocery store’s tenure.

I encourage you to recommend this proposal favorably to the City Council!

Sincerely,

Carlos Cecchi
407 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Support for 530 First Street Project

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Steve Muttu <sdmutty@gmail.com>

Mon 2/29/2016 5:15 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>; Karl Moritz <Karl.Moritz@alexandriava.gov>;

Dear Karl and Planning Commission:

I am writing in support of the proposed plan for 530 First Street.

I recently moved to an Alexandria address West of the RR tracks, but for the previous five years, I resided at 400 Madison St. (Alexandria House), a block from the proposed project. As a commercial real estate salesperson, I have been involved with numerous projects on the North Waterfront. I am also a member of the Waterfront Commission and have recently been appointed to the Motor Coach Task Force. I feel qualified to speak about the merits and challenges of new commercial developments in our City.

This block of First Street has been long overdue to bring a use that would permanently displace an eyesore in the heart of North Old Town that has suffered from poor lighting, no public access space, a lack of neighborhood-enhancing retail, not to mention loitering and crime. The point is that the developer has to deliver a project that makes a very positive impact, not something that is monolithic or lacks character.

The developer, Edens, has a reputation for developing urban projects that enliven communities without overpowering them. I am speaking first-hand, as one of my clients occupies space at their Mosaic project and I am also a frequent visitor to Union Market. What has impressed me is that their projects are appropriate to the surrounding community. As someone concerned about maintaining a balance between the old and the new as neighborhoods around the Old and Historic District evolve, after viewing their preliminary submission, I am comfortable that it is not Edens' intent to deliver a "Mosaic on the Potomac", but rather something that complements our community and adds just the right amount of vitality.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Muttu
3109 Cameron Mills Rd.
Alexandria, VA 22302

RE: Approval of the Edens Project

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Karl Moritz

Mon 2/29/2016 5:29 PM

To: Judy Noritake <jnoritake@nka-arch.com>; PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Cc: Kristen Walentisch <kristen.walentisch@alexandriava.gov>; Robert Kerns <robert.kerns@alexandriava.gov>; Nathan Randall <Nathan.Randall@alexandriava.gov>; Maya Contreras <Maya.Contreras@alexandriava.gov>;

Thank you very much. In addition to sharing with the Planning Commission, I'll make sure that your input is part of the public record for the case.

Karl

Karl W. Moritz

Planning Director | City of Alexandria

Room 2100 | 301 King Street | Alexandria, VA 22314

Desk: 703-746-3804 | Cell: 571-329-3052

From: Judy Noritake [mailto:jnoritake@nka-arch.com]

Sent: Monday, February 29, 2016 2:45 PM

To: PlanComm

Cc: Karl Moritz

Subject: Approval of the Edens Project

RE: Planning Commission Hearing, March 1, 2016, Docket Item 8

Dear Chairwoman Lyman and Members of the Planning Commission:

I wanted to send a short note in support of the Edens project proposed for the ABC/Giant site on the north end of Old Town. This part of Old Town continues to grow and diversify as has been evidenced by the very successful opening of a number of businesses and restaurants here, including the recently opened Hank's Pasta Bar. This particular development block has been substandard for many years and is now an eyesore with the closing of the Giant which is now used for commuter parking.

We are extremely fortunate to have this developer propose a project of this caliber for the site. The Edens folks have executed very well designed and constructed projects in D.C. and elsewhere, notable projects any community would be glad to have. The project they are proposing here lives up to their reputation on past projects. We should be thrilled to have them make the investment in our city because all of our surrounding communities would welcome a project like this with open arms. This is the type of development we need in North Old Town and these are the type of developers we can only hope will be interested in working throughout Alexandria.

This is an appropriate site for this relatively dense, urban project. It will bring much needed activity, both residential and commercial, to this part of the City. The modern aesthetics of the proposal should be commended. The design features varied roof heights, dramatic roof top open space for residents, high quality retail and

restaurants, and adequate public and private parking. While serving as a dramatic focal point for the neighborhood, it will also fit well into the existing context. And importantly, the project will provide affordable housing units on site. Within walking distance of the Braddock Metro, this is a great location to add to our city's stock of affordable, workforce units.

I have only one addition to offer: the larger of the two on-ground green areas should be considered to feature a bocce court. This elegant sport, played by young and old, would offer an interesting draw to the area and a really delightful activity for everyone in the neighborhood. The space looks big enough to accommodate such a court.

In closing I would ask that you support the Edens project, with all the various approval pieces in the docket item which will be required to make it a reality. The sooner this is under construction, the better it will be for growing this important part of Old Town.

Judy Noritake

Judy Guse-Noritake, AIA, LEED AP
Managing Principal



605 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
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www.noritakeassociates.com
jnoritake@nka-arch.com

Giant Site

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Alice Manor <ammanor@icloud.com>

Mon 2/29/2016 6:12 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

I am a resident of Liberty Row on First Street....I am in favor of the Edens site on First Street. I am a ten year resident and support the project with one concern. Traffic is already difficult for us to exit or driveway. Everyone wants to make the light on Washington Street....0 to 60 is the norm to make the light! Some calming would be helpful for all of us. Look forward to seeing this come to life! Thanks for your consideration. Alice Manor 635 First Street #105 liberty Row.

Sent from my iPad

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABC/GIANT SITE IN OLD TOWN NORTH

Analysis Submitted by the Liberty Row Condominium Board of Directors February 26, 2016

1. General Background:

Developer Edens owns the ABC/Giant site in Old Town North (OTN). It submitted its first concept plan to the City in June 2015 and it informed City staff that it had acquired an option to purchase both the Giant and ABC sites and that the option was set to expire in July 2015.

The proposal involves substantial development in OTN, as addressed in the Planning and Zoning Department's (P&Z) staff report dated February 19, 2016 (Staff Report). The P&Z Staff Report recommends this substantial project for the Planning Commission's approval at its March 1 meeting. Certain conditions to the approval are included in the Staff Report.

2. Impact of the Proposed Development on OTN:

This proposed development impacts OTN in several significant ways. It will result in the following, all of which are consistent with Edens' interests:

- a. A 232-unit rental apartment building consisting of about 254,000 square feet.
- b. A 51,000 square foot retail and restaurant complex (potentially including 841 restaurant seats) with a broad allowable use permit.
- c. Building height at the corner of First and N. St. Asaph Streets of 67 feet.
- d. Building heights on Montgomery Street of 77 feet.
- e. Residential, retail, and commercial garage entryway on First Street, which also will serve as the point of egress for residential and retail vehicles.
- f. Commercial vehicle egress on N. Pitt Street (right turn only on N. Pitt Street).
- g. Open space at ground level of 6,637 square feet. This represents only 7.6% of the entire site or 9.2% of the residential portion of the project.
- h. Substantial additional traffic on First Street, and queuing of traffic at the left-turn lane of N. Washington Street to First Street.
- i. Substantial additional traffic on N. St. Asaph Street, Montgomery and N. Pitt Streets.
- j. An 85-space reduction (more than 26%) in commercial parking spaces.
- k. Locating an electric transformer vault consisting of 772 square feet in the public right of way under Montgomery Street near the corner of N. Pitt Street. The requirement for an indemnity policy to cover potential injuries to persons or properties as a result of this encroachment is set by the City at only \$1 million.
- l. A structure that is very modern and inconsistent with the neo-traditional architecture of the surrounding community.

3. Recommendations of the Surrounding OTN Communities:

The surrounding OTN communities participated in numerous community meetings with Edens' representatives and objected to various aspects of the proposed development, recommending instead the following:

- a. Owner-occupied housing units as opposed to rental units at the site.
- b. Less mass, scale and density given current floor area ratio requirements (FAR).
- c. Restricting building heights along First Street to 50-55 feet.
- d. Locating points of residential, retail, and commercial ingress and egress away from First Street and N. Pitt Street to alternative points along N. St. Asaph and Montgomery Streets.
- e. Creating more open space at ground level on First Street.
- f. Compliance with City parking space requirements so as not to exacerbate the lack of parking spaces in OTN.
- g. Conducting a new traffic study taking into account additional data that more realistically simulate actual traffic flow in the affected area of OTN.
- h. Creating a building more stylistically consistent with the neo-traditional design theme of existing structures in the surrounding communities.
- i. Reviewing this development in conjunction with the proposed redevelopment of the Old Colony Inn, just two blocks away, and which will, if approved, expand the hotel from 49 rooms to 95 rooms, result in a further lack of parking in OTN, locate a restaurant on Second Street, and create challenging commercial vehicle traffic patterns in OTN.

4. Communities' Voices Disregarded by P&Z Staff Report:

The interests and concerns of property-owning taxpayers of the surrounding communities have not been heard by the P&Z staff. The objections to the proposed development raised by the communities have not been addressed. Property-owning taxpayers, whose communities will be affected materially and for years to come, can only look forward to the following:

- a. Wider sidewalks.
- b. A future bikeshare station near the First Street and N. St. Asaph Street intersection.
- c. A reduction in the width of the garage entrance on First Street from 50 feet to 40 feet.
- d. A modern commercial garage entry door on First Street that will be lit in the evenings.
- e. Additional trees to be planted perhaps somewhere along N. Washington Street.
- f. Funding from Edens to create additional green space somewhere in OTN at some indeterminate time.
- g. Funding from Edens to permit an adjustment to the left turn light at the intersection of N. Washington Street and First Street to address the increased traffic at this key intersection. But there is no definite timeframe for the adjustment of the timing software to ameliorate traffic queuing on N. Washington Street.
- h. A "neighborhood identification" sign along Montgomery Street stating "Old Town North."

5. How the Staff Report Justifies Developer Interests Against Those of the Neighboring Communities:

The communities' views are largely disregarded by P&Z. The P&Z Staff Report bases its approvals on bootstrapping arguments, convenient interpretations of various portions of the 1992 OTN SAP, and on a number of significant revisions to the site's zoning designation and City code requirements. The Staff Report strongly supports Edens' proposed development of the ABC/Giant site as the following demonstrates:

1. Going Forward in Advance of the OTN SAP Update. The OTN Small Area Plan (SAP) of 1992 has not yet been updated. Recommendations for the update will not be forthcoming until June-July 2016. The plan development phase will not occur until August 2016 to January 2017. Notwithstanding this timetable, the Staff Report states that the development of the ABC/Giant site will "go forward in advance of adoption of the OTN SAP update." (p. 4 of Staff Report) Restaurants will be operating until midnight on weekdays and until 1 am on weekends. Outdoor dining will occur until 11 pm every evening. (p. 21 of Staff Report) There may be more than two restaurants located at the site. What, then, is the value or purpose of the updating process? What ground rules apply, what is the relevance of current rules, to whom do they apply, who determines when and for whose benefit significant modifications can be made outside of ordinary procedures and processes?
2. Amending the Site's Zoning Designation. The maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR) for Commercial General (CG) zoning, currently applicable to the ABC/Giant site is 0.5 for nonresidential space and .75 for residential space. The Staff Report includes an amendment to the CG designation, changing it to Consolidated Development District (CDD) (CDD#25). The CDD designation would allow a 3.5 FAR and maximum height of 77 feet, as opposed to the current maximum building height of 50 feet. This revision allows construction of a 232-unit rental property at this approximately 2-acre site. There is no question but that such a development is excessively dense for the site. Application of the CDD zoning seems inconsistent with Section 5-601 of the Master Plan. Under that Section, the CDD zone is intended to encourage land assemblage and/or cooperation and joint planning where there are **multiple** owners in the CDD zoned area. That is not the case here. Edens is the **sole** land owner. (p. 13 of the Staff Report) The Kingsley Apartments, completed about a year ago atop the new Harris Teeter supermarket just two blocks to the south of Montgomery Street, consists of 175 rental units (FAR of 3.0). Assuming that rental units are to be constructed at the ABC/Giant site, the total number of such units should not exceed 175.
3. Bootstrapping Arguments Supporting High Density. As further justification for the CDD zone designation for the ABC/Giant site, the Staff Report states at p. 14 that: (a) higher density at this site or in this area are not unprecedented. The office building to the south on Montgomery Street was approved in 1986 and allowed a FAR of 2.98, and that the Harris Teeter two blocks away was approved in 2011 with a FAR of 3.0; and that (b) greater density is needed to support the significant amount of retail/commercial uses that are recommended in the OTN SAP for the "retail focus area." According to the Staff Report, "an adequate number of nearby residents and workers are needed to patronize businesses throughout the day to insure successful retail." To this end, the Staff Report recommends a 232-unit rental structure at the site, including 51,000 square feet of retail space, including possibly more than two restaurants (potentially up to 841 restaurant seats). Restaurants will be operating

until midnight on weekdays and until 1 am on weekends. Outdoor dining will occur until 11 pm every evening. (p. 21 of Staff Report) Bootstrapping rationalizations fail to recognize existing limitations and the yet-to-be-completed process for the OTN SAP update. Under this approach, the OTN SAP updating process should be dismantled because it is irrelevant. Indeed, as the Staff Report acknowledges, zoning changes will be made on a case-by-case basis notwithstanding the pendency of the OTN SAP updating process.

4. Ignoring Certain Residential Communities and Focusing on Nearby Commercial Structures. To justify exceeding the 50-foot height limitations, the Staff Report cites the 1992 OTN SAP's goal #2, for the "establishment of height limitations that protect and preserve low-rise residential scale in most of the area, accommodate appropriate designs for higher scale development in designated retail and commercial areas, and establish transitions between higher and lower height areas." (p. 10 of Staff Report) The Staff Report mentions that the commercial building on Montgomery Street is 112 feet tall, that the commercial building at the corner of N. St. Asaph and Montgomery Street is 109 feet tall, and that the Alexandria House (a very tall cooperative building) is just one block away to the south. But the Staff Report's reference to the ABC/Giant site as an "isolated parcel" (p. 12 of Staff Report) creates a false impression of this site. The 63-unit Liberty Row Condominium residential community is just across First Street to the north with building heights of about 50 feet. The building height being approved for First Street and N. St. Asaph Street will be 67 feet. Toward Montgomery Street, the building height will be 77 feet. The 100-unit Watergate residential community along N. Pitt Street has substantially lower heights (approximately 25 feet). A portion of N. Pitt Street near the First Street intersection will have rental units with heights of about 30 feet. But immediately behind these lower structures, heights will rise significantly. Even though building heights will vary somewhat on the site, there will be substantial mass and scale of structures with 67- and 77-foot heights across First Street from Liberty Row, and with 77-foot heights on Montgomery Street.
5. Allowing a More than 26% Parking Space Deficiency. The City's parking requirements require the developer to provide 564 underground parking spaces — 240 spaces to support 232 rental units; and 324 spaces for the 51,000 square feet of retail space. Instead, the developer will provide 242 residential parking spaces and 239 retail spaces. The difference between the required 324 spaces and actual 239 retail spaces is a deficit of 85 spaces (more than 26%). Edens argues that "there are a number of on-street parking spaces available throughout the weekday evening hours and weekend hours within a two-block radius of the site." (p.53 of traffic impact study by Edens' consultant Wells and Associates, Inc.) However the analysis, which involves many assumptions and adjustments, may not be consistent with this conclusion. Recently, a new restaurant opened at the southwest corner of N. St. Asaph and Montgomery Streets. During the weekday evening hours, there is very little street parking available in the area referred to by the developer's traffic impact study. Allowing a 26% parking deficiency for this site will adversely affect the adjacent communities.
6. Allowing Strict Adherence to "Retail Focus Streets" to Exacerbate Local Traffic Patterns. The developer and the Staff Report refer to Montgomery and N. St. Asaph Streets as the 'retail focus streets.' They refuse to locate driveway entrances or exits on these two streets. With residential, retail, and commercial vehicles required to enter the site at First Street, additional traffic congestion will occur on First Street. This is of particular concern to the Liberty Row community, whose only point of ingress/egress is on First Street, about 100 feet

from the intersection of First and N. Washington Streets. Commercial vehicles will be traveling down N. St. Asaph Street and turning right onto First Street in order to make the entry turn into the First Street garage entrance. The communities suggested commercial vehicle entry on N. St. Asaph Street. In order to service retail and restaurant facilities, such an entry should be feasible, with egress remaining on N. Pitt Street as currently planned, with a right-turn only onto N. Pitt Street. However, the options considered by the developer did not take this pattern into consideration. (Options considered discussed at p. 18 of Staff Report) Under the planned garage entry point on First Street, it does not appear that the 1992 OTN SAP goal #5 is met — the creation and reinforcement of a strong and inviting streetscape and a traffic pattern that relates the area to the Old and Historic District. The intersection at which this garage entrance will be located is just across the N. Pitt Street border of the Watergate residential community. Homes facing this area will see additional traffic, including large commercial vehicles coming down First Street on a regular basis.

7. Granting an Umbrella Special Use Permit. The Staff Report allows the developer to obtain a special use permit (SUP) for multiple commercial purposes, excluding only light assembly and crafts and valet parking. (pp. 20-21 of Staff Report) There is a possibility, then, of many different uses of the property that may not be strictly “retail.” For example, the uses permissible under the SUP would include day care facilities (which introduce additional traffic issues related to drop-offs and pick-ups); health and athletic clubs; personal service establishments; massage establishments; pet supplies, grooming, training with no overnight accommodation; private schools, academic or commercial, with more than 20 students on the premises at any one time; restaurants and outdoor dining. Therefore, it would be difficult to prohibit some enterprises from locating at this site in the future once approval is granted for such a broad SUP.

6. Conclusion:

The proposed development of the ABC/Giant site has progressed on a very expeditious basis (less than one year). This is a significant proposal for OTN and its property-owning taxpayers. Interests of the relevant communities have not been addressed adequately in the proposed development plan or in the Staff Report. This result is disappointing to the communities, whose many residents participated in numerous meetings with Edens’ representatives. Once development is approved by all relevant City authorities, the impact on residents and their communities will be material and long lasting. It may be advisable, instead, for P&Z to take additional time reviewing the Edens application, revisit the many issues raised by the communities and to consider the extent to which significant zoning changes should be made prior to the 1992 OTN SAP update, assuming that process remains relevant.

As part of a more deliberate review, the P&Z, rather than the developer, should host community meetings on the proposed development. This would allow a meaningful discussion between citizens and City staff and developer representatives. Additional time also should be taken to conduct revised analyses of traffic issues. Further it may be advisable for traffic consultants to report findings directly to the P&Z staff as opposed to the developer.

Finally, P&Z should analyze OTN development issues on a comprehensive basis so that more realistic impacts on communities, citizens, and quality of life issues may be evaluated.

Edens Project, First Street

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

moncure@comcast.net

Tue 3/1/2016 10:59 AM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

To the Members of the Planning Commission,

We live on North Saint Asaph Street down from the proposed Edens project at 530 First Street, and we have enjoyed the recent development in North Old Town. We look forward to learning more about the Edens project, and believe that in concept it will be a thoughtful addition to North Old Town.

Our concern is always that traffic be managed to avoid excessive traffic – residential, commercial, heavy trucks - on North Saint Asaph Street. We ask that the City ensure that a Traffic Management Plan be implemented with this project to help address this concern.

Yours.

Kathy and Richard Moncure

530 First Street - Old Town North Alexandria

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Shea, Robert <Robert.Shea@us.gt.com>

Tue 3/1/2016 12:43 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

To whom it may concern:

I am a resident and business owner in Alexandria. I wanted to write you in my personal capacity to lend my strong support to plans submitted by Edens for the redevelopment of 530 First Street in Old Town North Alexandria.

The plans, currently under consideration by your office, would enhance an unsightly and unproductive block of Old Town North. Moreover, it would add a dynamic mix of residential and retail in a way envisioned by the city's Old Town North Small Area Plan. And the community benefits offered by the developers are substantial. With affordable housing the source of so much recent controversy, the Edens proposal seems a no brainer.

Thank you for giving the Edens proposal for 530 First Street your strong consideration.

Gratefully,

Robert Shea

Robert Shea | Principal

Grant Thornton LLP

333 John Carlyle, Suite 500 | Alexandria, VA | 22314 | United States

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530 First Street - Old Town North Alexandria

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Nancy Appleby <Nancy@ApplebyLawPLLC.com>

Tue 3/1/2016 12:48 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Cc: Nancy Appleby <Nancy@ApplebyLawPLLC.com>;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I understand that, this evening, the Planning Commission will take up a proposal by EDENS to redevelop the Giant/ABC site in North Old Town. I am unable to attend the meeting. However, I want to share with you my strong support for the project and hope that, notwithstanding some community opposition that the Commission no doubt will hear this evening, the Commission passes favorably on the project.

I live in Building 1 of the Liberty Row Condominiums (600 First Street), diagonally across First Street from the Giant/ABC site. The site has been underutilized and has added no economic or aesthetic value to the North Old Town neighborhood for quite a long time. The EDENS Old Town North Alexandria project offers an opportunity to energize North Old Town desirable retail in an attractive building that complements the mix of residential and commercial uses in North Old Town. Of course, some residents (including, I believe, the President of the Liberty Row COA) will complain that the project will bring more residents and, hence, more traffic and congestion to our neighborhood. With all due respect, I respond to such complaints by reminding my neighbors that (i) redevelopment of the Giant/ABC site is (and has been) inevitable; (ii) they chose to live in an urban setting, where density is to be expected and (iii) continued underutilization of the Giant/ABC both creates a pall on our neighborhood and is detrimental to necessary and appropriate efforts to rebalance the City's tax base so that we can continue to enjoy the quality of life in Old Town that drew us here. I posit also that EDENS' vision and design of the project is compatible with the neighborhood and that the project will be an attractive, neighborhood-friendly addition to North Old Town.

I urge each of you to pass favorably on the project.

Regards,

Nancy Appleby



.....Nancy J. Appleby
.....Appleby Law PLLC
.....333 North Fairfax Street, Suite 302
.....Alexandria, Virginia 22314
.....703-837-0001 (office)
.....202-577-5655 (mobile)
.....703-997-4868 (fax)

Support for 530 First Street - Old Town North Project

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Elizabeth Chisman Moon <ecmoon@focusdatasolutions.com>

Tue 3/1/2016 12:55 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Dear Commissioners:

I write today to voice my support of the 530 First Street – Old Town North project. My company, Focus Data Solutions, is located at 1020 North Fairfax Street. Attracting and retaining employees is a major factor in our business' success. Today's workforce considers more than salary alone when joining our firm. Employees look at location, including access to retail, restaurants and entertainment venues. Open space and pedestrian experiences and easy transportation are also important for a workforce that is healthy and active. The commercial and residential plan for 530 First Street is exactly what this neighborhood needs to be a viable residential and commercial area that contributes to the economic development of Alexandria. The new amenities will improve our employees' experience here in Old Town North, help us attract talent, and may determine if we stay in North Old Town.

As both an Alexandria resident (Formerly Old Town North, now Del Ray) and an Alexandria business owner, Edens 530 First Street project represents a type of development and opportunity I believe our City should encourage and support.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Chisman Moon



Elizabeth Chisman Moon • President/CEO • Focus Data Solutions, Inc.

1020 N. Fairfax St. • Suite 400 • Alexandria, VA • 22314

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After Hours & Holiday Emergency Service at 866-748-5202.

Support for Eden-North End Old Town

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Amanda Chandler <achandler@focusdatasolutions.com>

Tue 3/1/2016 1:11 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Dear Commissioners:

I write today to voice my support of the 530 First Street – Old Town North project. I am a native to the area, I work in the North End and serve on several community boards. The commercial and residential plan for 530 First Street is exactly what this neighborhood needs to be a viable residential and commercial area that contributes to the economic development of Alexandria.

Amanda



Amanda Chandler • Client Services Advocate • Focus Data Solutions, Inc.

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Edens

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

Kerry Donley <kdonley@johnmarshallbank.com>

Tue 3/1/2016 2:00 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

Cc: cpuskar@thelandlawyers.com <cpuskar@thelandlawyers.com>;

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

I am writing in support of the Edens project coming to you tonight. This project represents an opportunity to creatively redevelop an area of North Old Town which has been sorely underutilized for decades, as a Giant store which had seen its better days many years ago and the ABC site which was off our tax rolls. The project brings a mix of uses which does not over concentrate traffic impacts but rather spreads traffic throughout the day. The residential uses are compatible with the surrounding blocks which are both residential and commercial in nature. Additionally there will be added retail and restaurant uses which will lend vitality to the area and is needed to serve the community both during the day and on evenings and weekends.

The developer also appears to be making significant contributions to Alexandria which will benefit the immediate project but also the surrounding neighborhoods. Affordable housing, sewer separation, open space and Capital BikeShare are all in keeping with well-established City priorities. The project will also upgrade the urban landscape with tree wells, benches, lighting and public plazas making it an inviting area in which to live and visit.

I know that building heights have been a concern but the project appears to use a variety of heights to make the project more appealing as opposed to the block-type, tabletop buildings which often exist in the City. Additionally, there are a number of buildings in the immediate area which are much taller so I hardly feel the proposed buildings will in anyway detract from the area due to their heights. In my opinion, the opposite will occur and the project will be a positive addition to North Old Town.

Finally, I do think it is important that we look to the positive aspects of job creation and revenue generation which the City sorely needs for the provision of public services. Land use decisions should not necessarily be made because of the impacts on our tax base, but when we have the opportunity to create a pleasing project which meets our goals together with positive revenue implications the City should welcome the project as one which adds to our vibrancy and does so with a net benefit to our tax base.

I hope you will favorably consider this project.

Sincerely,

Kerry J. Donley

Senior Vice President



1943 Isaac Newton Square, Reston, VA 20190

VISION

Volunteers in Service to the Improvement of Old Town North

2020 Vision Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Email: vision.alexandria@gmail.com
Phone: (999) 999-9999

December 16, 2015

Mr. Karl Moritz
Director, Department of Planning and Zoning
301 King Street, Room 2100
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Karl:

In 2015, a group of civic-minded Alexandrians residing in Old Town North (OTN) came together to establish a new organization called Volunteers in Service to the Improvement of Old Town North (VISION). Although still in its infancy, the organization has already contributed substantially toward its ultimate goal of ensuring a brighter future for all who live, work, and do business in our part of town. In this, its inaugural year, VISION members have:

- Produced a 15-page analytical report that helped shape the City's redevelopment plan for Montgomery Park;
- Partnered with the City Arborist to enhance Alexandria's tree planting program in both Old Town and Old Town North; and
- Provided a reliable and unbiased source of information for citizens concerned about the pace, scope, and appropriateness of development in our neighborhoods.

Consistent with its overarching mission to improve the lives and wellbeing of all who reside and work in Old Town North, over the past year, VISION has closely monitored plans for the development of the ABC/Giant site at 530 First Street. While we have consistently supported this initiative and welcome the vitality and commercial services that it promises to bring to our area, VISION has been called upon to give voice to a number of concerns that local residents have about key elements of the project. In this respect, it is our goal to enhance, not to obstruct or subvert, the proposed development. It is our sincere objective to work with all stakeholders to help strike a fair and equitable balance between commercial interests and the interests of the surrounding community.

Our concerns about the Edens development encompass the following issues:

- The height and density of the proposed project;
- The increase in local traffic that will inevitably result from the development;
- The potential for parking demand “spillover” onto surrounding streets; and
- The proposed location of the development’s garage entrances and exits on First Street and Pitt Street.

While described separately below, these aspects of the proposed project are inextricably linked and, ultimately, must be addressed organically.

Height and Density

The Edens developers have requested an amendment to the City’s master plan to allow for parts of the new development to exceed the current height limitation of 50 feet by more than 50% (i.e., 77 feet). This seems excessive, given the scale of surrounding buildings and the canyon-like effect that such heights tend to create. But equally important, lifting the present height restriction would serve to promote increased density, which, in turn, would create another set of potential problems, especially concerning parking and traffic. For a two-acre site, the proposed development would be quite massive in scale, with some 232 residential apartments and 51,000 square feet of retail.

Parking

Given the scale of the proposed development, it is not surprising that Edens has requested an 83-space (25.7%) reduction in the City’s parking code requirement for the retail/restaurant portion of the site. Applying United Land Institute’s (ULI) “shared parking analysis,” which assumes that a parking space can serve multiple uses without conflict or encroachment, Edens argues that, even with the requested reduction, there would be adequate parking to serve the project’s retail/restaurant parking needs. In addition, Edens points out that “there are a number of on-street parking spaces available throughout the weekday evening hours and weekend hours within a two-block radius of the site.”¹ However, ULI’s shared parking analysis methodology involves numerous assumptions and adjustments—which may or may not hold up in actual practice—and the availability of on-street parking during weekdays was not even investigated by Edens. In contrast to Edens’ findings, a 2014 survey conducted by the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, found that nearly half (46%) of respondents reported that

¹ Wells and Associates, Inc., “530 First Street Traffic Impact Study – City of Alexandria, Virginia,” November 13, 2015, p. 53.

insufficient parking had prevented them from visiting Montgomery Park, located just one block from the ABC/Giant site.² This suggests that the surrounding neighborhood's capacity to absorb any spillover demand for parking may have already reached its limit.

The shared parking methodology employed by Edens distinguishes between residential and commercial parking and excludes the former from its analysis. However, this is an artificial distinction. If the height and scale of the residential component of development were reduced, additional parking would be freed up for commercial use, and there would be less need for the developer to seek a reduction in the City's parking code requirement.

Traffic

According to Edens' traffic impact study, no fewer than seven approaches to and from N. Washington Street in the area surrounding the proposed development site currently operate at level of service (LOS) "E"—defined as "unstable flow" or "operating at capacity." During the morning and evening rush hours, traffic volume on N. Pitt Street vastly exceeds the volume on *all other streets* circumscribing the ABC/Giant site. In fact, peak morning traffic on N. Pitt Street surpasses volume on Montgomery Street by more than 275 percent! First Street presents its own, equally problematic, concerns related to traffic overload. During the evening rush hour, peak queues in the left-hand turn lane from N. Washington Street onto First Street *already* exceed holding capacity, even in the absence of any development.

Projecting into the future, several pipeline projects are expected to generate an additional 5,510 daily trips by the year 2021. The proposed development at the ABC/Giant site, when completed, would generate another 3,964 daily trips, and the queue at the left-hand turn lane from N. Washington Street onto First Street—already exceeding capacity—would increase by an additional *100 feet* during the evening rush hour.

Obviously, the foregoing analysis should raise concerns among all who live and work in the neighborhoods surrounding the proposed Edens development. But the adverse impact of the project on traffic flows *can* be mitigated—at least to some degree—simply by limiting the height and density of the proposed development.

Location of Proposed Garage Entrances and Exits

A final concern, especially for the residents of Watergate of Alexandria and Liberty Row, involves the proposed locations of the garage entrances and exits. The attached drawings vividly illustrate the problem. The developers propose to locate

² Drury, D. (VISION), Montgomery Park Report: Citizen Feedback on Revised Draft Plan, November 19, 2015, p.8.

a single entry/exit for *all* cars (both residential and retail) combined with a service entrance for *all* trucks servicing the 51,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space on First Street. This would require a gaping three-lane entrance/exit that would extend for approximately one-quarter of the entire block face, or roughly 50 feet. A separate exit for trucks servicing the retail establishments is proposed for N. Pitt Street.

Not surprisingly, this single feature of the proposed design has caused more consternation among residents than any other. During the public meeting at which this aspect of the proposed development was presented, residents of the surrounding community were both shocked and perplexed. The negative reaction was nearly universal, as documented by a petition circulated immediately following the presentation of this element of the design that was signed by approximately 90 percent of attendees.

The reasons for this reaction should be obvious. As indicated by the traffic flow analysis presented earlier, First Street and N. Pitt Street are already highly congested and, if the garage entrances and exits were located there, the problem would be exacerbated substantially. One can only imagine eighteen-wheelers, with their wide turn radius, swinging out into oncoming traffic on First Street to make a right turn into the garage entrance, further impeding the flow of traffic. Perhaps even more critical, the proposed location of the garage entrances and exits on First Street and N. Pitt Street would threaten the quality of life and financial investment of those living adjacent to the site at Watergate of Alexandria and Liberty Row. Noxious exhaust fumes and noise from 60'- long trucks entering and exiting the site would become a regular feature of their lives, and, according to the assessment of realtors consulted by VISION, property values would plummet.

Concluding Remarks

We request that the Department of Planning and Zoning consider the concerns outlined in this letter and partner with VISION, Edens, and other stakeholders to reach an equitable solution to the deficiencies highlighted here. Again, we welcome this development and do not ask to dictate any specific feature of its design. However, we *do* ask that you seriously weigh our concerns and negotiate an arrangement that meets the interests of both Edens and local residents.

Sincerely,

Darrel W. Drury, Ph.D.
President, VISION

Attachment

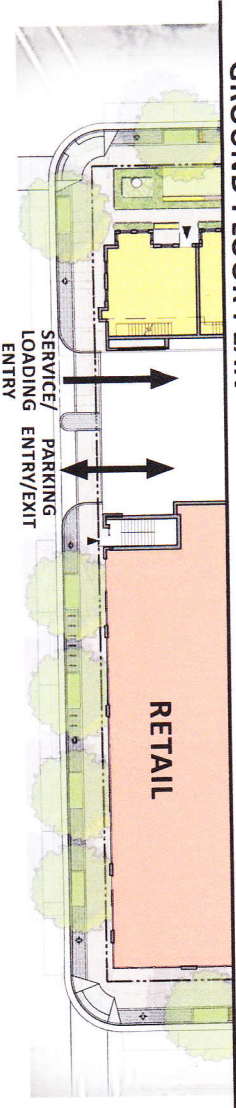
NORTH ELEVATION (ELEVATION B)



TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL FLOOR PLAN

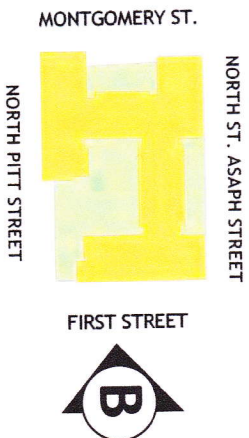


GROUND FLOOR PLAN



BUILDING ELEVATIONS SCALE: NTS

EXTERIOR ELEVATION KEYNOTE LEGEND	
4.1A	BRICK VENEER - TYPE 1
4.1B	BRICK VENEER - TYPE 2
4.1C	BRICK VENEER - TYPE 3 - PAINTED
4.1D	BRICK VENEER - TYPE 4
7.1	FIBER CEMENT PANEL - TYPE 1
7.2	FIBER CEMENT PANEL - TYPE 2
7.3	PANELIZED FACADE - WOOD APPEARANCE
7.4	FIBER CEMENT PANEL - TYPE 3
7.5	PREFINISHED METAL COPING
8.1	ALUMINUM WINDOWS AND/OR DOORS
8.2	CONTINUOUS LOUVER BAND
8.3	ALUMINUM STOREFRONT SYSTEM



N. PITT STREET

N. ST. ASAPH STREET
PUBLIC STREET

~~FIRST STREET~~

VIRGINIA STATE CROD
NAD B3, NORTH ZONE



APPROVED	
SPECIAL USE PERMIT NO. 2015-0019	
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING	
DIRECTOR _____	SITE _____
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURAL SERVICES	
SITE PLAN NO. _____	_____
DIRECTOR _____	SITE _____
ZONING & PLANNING COMMISSION _____	
DATE RECEIVED _____	SITE _____
RECEIVED NO. _____	_____
CITY BOOK NO. _____	PAGE NO. _____

DATE	DESCRIPTION		
DP	DP	SL	
DESIGN	DRAWN	CHD	
SCALE	1: 1 = 20		
V:			
JOB No.	8476-01-00		
DATE	OCTOBER, 201		
FILE No.	8476-D-PR-00		
SHEET C9.00			

TRUCK TURNING MOVEMENT ENTER
530 FIRST STREET
DEVELOPMENT PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN
CITY OF ALEXANDRIA VIRGINIA

Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd.
14020 Thunderbolt Place
Suite 300
Alexandria, Virginia 20151
Phone: (703) 464-1000
Fax: (703) 481-9720
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Bowman
CONSULTING

Letter to Planning Commission Re: ABC/Giant Development

MPA/2015-0009/BSUB/2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

darrel drury <drury.darrel@gmail.com>

Tue 3/1/2016 2:33 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

 1 attachment (216 KB)

Letter to Planning Commission 1.pdf;

Dear Commissioner,

I hope that you will have time to review the attached letter prior to this evening's Planning Commission meeting, as it contains substantial detail and I feel that it would be difficult to follow my presentation without having read the letter. (If possible, I would appreciate it if I could be allotted sufficient time to read the letter in its entirety.)

Please note that the letter references an attachment, Figure 1, which is not included here. I had some difficulty with my scanner, so I will bringing copies of the attachment to the meeting. However, the letter should be easily understood without the attachment.

Thank you,

Darrel Drury

Darrel W. Drury, Ph.D.
1030 North Royal Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

(703) 683-3999 (Home)
(202) 550-6098 (Cell)
(703) 683-3999 (Fax)



Volunteers in Service to the Improvement of Old Town North

1030 North Royal Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Email: vision.alexandria@gmail.com
Phone: (703) 683-3999

March 1, 2016

Planning Commission
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Planning Commission Member:

I am writing to you as president of VISION, a civic organization founded in 2015 that represents the interests of more than 1,500 residents, workers, and small business owners in Old Town North. This past December, I addressed the Alexandria City Council on behalf of VISION and provided an overview of our organization's concerns regarding the development proposed for the ABC/Giant site at 530 First Street. For a detailed account of the issues raised in that presentation, I refer you to VISION's letter to the City Council (dated December 12, 2015), appended to the Staff Report.

In the present context, I want to call your attention to our organization's *single most critical concern*—i.e., the dangerous conditions (for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians alike) that currently exist at the intersection of First Street and North Washington Street and the likelihood that these conditions will be exacerbated if the proposed development is approved in the absence of further study and design changes. In the sections below, I shall draw upon the Traffic Impact Study commissioned by Edens¹ and the findings of an independent investigation conducted by VISION to explain our position. The first two sections are designed to assist the Commission in fully grasping current conditions at the First Street/North Washington Street intersection and future conditions that can be expected at that location after development. Following that discussion, a final section will describe additional, updated information that we feel must be incorporated in a revised traffic study prior to the Commission's consideration of Edens' proposal to develop the ABC/Giant site.

As president of VISION, I would like to emphasize that it is our organization's overarching mission to improve the lives and wellbeing of all who reside and work in Old Town North. It is not our objective to obstruct or subvert the proposed development, but, rather, to ensure that the project is designed in a manner that does not exacerbate existing traffic congestion, resulting in the endangerment of both current and future residents, as well as patrons of the retail component of the proposed mixed use development.

¹ Workosky, M., Pinkoske, M. Cavan, J., & Barbour, J., *530 First Street Traffic Impact Study* (November 13, 2015).

Current Conditions (Without Development)

Figure 1 depicts the intersection at First Street and North Washington Street, along with a series of downstream obstructions to the flow of traffic on First Street. Today, in the absence of the proposed development, the queue of automobiles seeking to turn left from North Washington Street onto First Street already exceeds the storage capacity of the left-hand turn lane during the peak evening rush hour, causing the queue to spill over into through-traffic lanes, thus creating a dangerous choke point for southbound commuters on North Washington Street. With left-hand turn queues up to 172 feet long during the peak evening rush hour, weary commuters returning from work will often try to “beat the light,” making a left onto First Street even after the left-hand turn signal has turned from green to red. Given this situation, it is not surprising that traffic engineers have found that fully half of all crashes at the intersection of North Washington Street and First Street are the result of drivers making left-hand turns while failing to yield to oncoming traffic—a *greater proportion than at any other intersection on the entire Washington Street corridor*.²

Drivers who successfully negotiate the left-hand turn onto First Street may then encounter any of a number of obstructions that can block traffic, impeding the movement of vehicles behind them. Presently, such blockages—denoted in Figure 1 with black numbers in white circles—include: (1) cars entering and exiting the Liberty Row condominiums’ parking lot; (2) cars entering and exiting the AFBA building garage; (3&4) cars, taxis, and hospitality vans entering and exiting the Holiday Inn hotel; and (5) cars, taxis, and tour busses parking on First Street in front of the hotel.

Future Conditions (With Development)

Scale and Density. The scale and density of the development that has been proposed would, if approved, seriously aggravate the traffic situation described above. Edens has requested an amendment to the City’s master plan to allow the development to exceed the current height limitation of 50 feet by more than 50% (i.e., 77 feet) and is seeking to increase the FAR from 0.5 (non-residential) and 0.75 (residential) to 3.5. For a two-acre site, the proposed development would be quite massive in scale, with some 232 residential apartments and 51,000 square feet of retail, including restaurant seating for 841 diners.

The implications for traffic congestion in the future are daunting. Several pipeline projects throughout Old Town North that are currently in various stages of development are expected to generate about 5,510 daily trips by the year 2021. This, in turn, will increase the length of the queue at the left-hand turn lane on North Washington Street by about 27 feet. The Edens development, when completed, would generate 3,964 *additional* daily trips and extend the left-turn lane queue on North Washington Street by another *100 feet*, for a total of 299 feet.

² *Washington Street Corridor Traffic Operations and Safety Analysis: 2008-2010*. (April 25, 2011) Appendix A.

Parking. Despite the massive scale of the proposed development, Edens has requested an 85-space (26%) *reduction* in the City’s parking code requirement for the retail/restaurant portion of the site. Applying United Land Institute’s (ULI) “shared parking analysis”—which assumes that a parking space can serve multiple uses without conflict or encroachment—the developer argues that, even with the requested reduction, there would be adequate parking to serve the project’s retail/restaurant parking needs. In addition, Edens observes that “there are a number of on-street parking spaces available throughout the weekday evening hours and weekend hours within a two-block radius of the site.”³

But ULI’s shared parking analysis methodology involves numerous assumptions and adjustments—which may or may not hold up in actual practice—and the availability of on-street parking during *daytime* hours on weekdays and during the peak evening rush hour was not even investigated by Edens. In stark contrast to the developer’s findings, a 2014 survey conducted by the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities found that nearly half (46%) of respondents reported that insufficient parking had prevented them from visiting Montgomery Park, which is located just one block from the ABC/Giant site.⁴ This suggests that the surrounding neighborhood’s capacity to absorb any spillover demand for parking has already reached its limit.

Garage Entrances and Exits. The single feature of the proposed development’s design that has caused more concern among residents than any other is that which locates the loading dock entrance for all delivery vehicles (including 18-wheeler trucks), along with the garage entrance and exit for all cars, on First Street. This aspect of the design effectively funnels every southbound car on North Washington Street traveling to the development into the left-hand turn lane at the First Street intersection. It is no wonder, then, that the queue in the left-hand turn lane of North Washington Street is expected to stretch the length of a football field upon completion of the Edens development!

Implications. The implications of the foregoing discussion should be obvious. Returning to Figure 1, it is not difficult to comprehend how southbound evening commuters on North Washington Street, encountering overwhelming traffic congestion at the First Street intersection, will be hard-pressed to make the left-hand turn onto First Street during a single cycle of the turn signal. Already a dangerous intersection, more drivers than ever will try to beat the light, and, inevitably, more crashes will occur. In addition, with the advent of the Edens development, the adverse impact of the previously discussed obstructions along First Street will be compounded due to the increased volume of traffic and the presence of drivers maneuvering to parallel park on First Street in order to gain easy access to the development.⁵

Drivers making a left-hand turn onto First Street will encounter not only the pre-existing downstream blockages discussed above, but several new ones as well (denoted in Figure 1 with white numbers in black circles). These include: (6) trucks—some more than sixty feet in

³ Workosky et al., p. 53.

⁴ Drury, D. *Montgomery Park Report: Citizen Feedback on Revised Draft Plan*, November 19, 2015, p. 8.

⁵ In light of this observation, the parking study conducted by Edens—which failed to examine the availability of parking during the evening rush hour—seems especially inadequate.

length—swinging out into the westbound lane of First Street to make the right-hand turn from North St. Asaph Street en route to the (poorly placed) loading dock entrance on First Street; (7) additional pedestrian traffic from the Holiday Inn and surrounding residential communities crossing First Street to dine or shop at the new development; (8) additional bicycle traffic due to the installation of a new Capital Bikeshare station on North St. Asaph Street; and (9) cars entering and exiting the development's sole point of ingress and egress at First Street and service trucks swinging out into the westbound lane of First Street to make a right-hand turn into the loading dock entrance.

Combined, these additional obstructions to the flow of traffic on First Street are likely to further complicate the situation at the intersection of North Washington Street and First Street, making it even more dangerous than it is today. But this need not happen. The adverse impact of the proposed development on traffic flows *can* be mitigated—at least to some degree—simply by limiting the development's height and density, providing the number of parking spaces required by City code, and relocating the garage and loading dock entrances and exits away from First Street.

Call for New Traffic Impact Study and New Design

The foregoing analysis should raise concerns among all who live and work in the neighborhoods surrounding the proposed development, as well as those who commute on a regular basis between Washington, DC and Alexandria. The historical record of crashes at the North Washington Street/First Street intersection and the identification of the various downstream obstructions that will impact traffic congestion on First Street would seem to lead any objective observer to the conclusion that the project is too large, too dense, and suffers from a critical design flaw—i.e., the placement of the garage entrance and exit and service vehicle loading dock entrance on First Street.

Viewed in this light, it is reasonable to ask: Why does neither the traffic impact study nor the staff report accompanying the developer's application raise any “red flags”? The answer is quite simple: Because, until this point, no one has seriously considered any of the facts set forth above. But there is another reason why this flawed proposal has reached the Planning Commission despite its inherent deficiencies. The methodology employed in the traffic impact study is so outdated that it simply lacks the capacity to examine the concerns we have raised. The contractor conducting the study (Wells and Associates, Inc.) has inexplicably elected to employ methodologies that were developed in the late 1990s, despite the fact that newer, updated methods for conducting traffic capacity analyses have existed since 2010.

The software employed by Wells and Associates is known as Synchro 7, which is an implementation of methodologies found in the *Highway Capacity Manual: 2000* (HCM2000), developed nearly two decades ago and published in 2000 by the Transportation Research Board's Highway Capacity and Quality of Services Committee, an entity of the National Academy of Sciences. Indeed, Synchro 7 is *so out of date* that it is no longer supported by its developer, Trafficware, Inc. A more recent version, Synchro 9, based on the updated *Highway Capacity Manual: 2010* (HCM2010), includes several critical features that would significantly modify the transportation study commissioned by Edens.

Specifically, the more recent HCM:2010 methodology includes:

- An integrated multimodal approach to the analysis and evaluation of urban traffic conditions that—*for the first time ever*—takes into account the effects of cars on bicyclists and pedestrians; and
- An updated incremental queue accumulation (IQA) method that is more flexible than the previous application found in HCM2000 since it accommodates the differing saturation flow rates that can occur with protected-plus-permitted left turn situations like that found at the North Washington Street/First Street intersection.⁶

These are not trivial improvements—they reflect more than \$5 million of research completed since HCM2000 was published 16 years ago. As Alexandria continues to expand and refine its multimodal transportation network, it is absolutely critical that we understand how bicyclists and pedestrians will impact traffic flows. To move forward with Edens’ application in the face of updated information that is readily available in HCM2010 would constitute a major disservice to our community. And this is not the opinion of just one organization representing the interests of Old Town North residents. A study published in the official journal of the prestigious Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences emphatically states that, “depending on the pedestrian volume and traffic conditions, the [HCM2000] procedure could produce significant error, [including] erroneous results in capacity and delay estimations.”⁷

While a revised traffic study employing Synchro 9—incorporating the updated information in HCM2010—would, undoubtedly, provide invaluable information concerning the impact of cars on bicyclists and pedestrians as well as improved estimates of expected capacity and delays, it may not provide a realistic assessment of other potential problems. Synchro 9 employs a macro-level model based on aggregate data. But such models do “not take into account the potential impact of downstream congestion on intersection operation” and, therefore, may underestimate delays at intersections when downstream blockages are present.⁸ That, of course, describes the situation at the intersection of North Washington Street and First Street precisely, where at least nine present and future downstream blockages have been identified in our analysis. For that reason, Trafficware recommends that Synchro 9 be employed in conjunction with a micro-level simulation model, such as SimTraffic. The Alexandria Department of Transportation and Environmental Services prefers an alternative micro-level model, VISSIM, but, unfortunately, it does not require *any* micro simulations for developments the size of the Edens project. We believe that this is a mistake. When conducting traffic capacity analyses for developments in congested, urban areas, such as Old Town North, a micro simulation is appropriate, regardless of a development’s size.

⁶ The Highway Capacity and Quality of Service Committee of the Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Sciences, *Highway Capacity Manual*, 2010.

⁷ Cheng, D., Tian, Z., & Liu, H. Implementing Actuated Signal-controlled Intersection Capacity Analysis with Pedestrians, *Transportation Research Record*, 2008, p.1.

⁸ Trafficware, *Synchro and SimTraffic Training Guide*, 2007, p. A-2.

The City of Alexandria's *Transportation Planning Administrative Guidelines* specify that, "if a study was conducted for a project site and there is updated information that would impact the transportation network or modify the transportation study in any way, the applicant will be required to resubmit an updated transportation study before approval by Planning Commission and Council."⁹ In the case of the proposed Edens development, such "updated information" clearly exists, and, therefore, we request that the Commission direct the applicant to resubmit a revised transportation study incorporating this new information before the Planning Commission considers its application.

Specifically, we request that the Planning Commission require Edens to revise its traffic impact study employing Synchro 9—or alternative software based on HCM2010—and provide the data files and updated report to T&ES and VISION for review. We further request that the Commission direct Edens to complete a micro-level analysis, and, again, make the findings available for our review. (As an alternative to this latter request, T&ES staff could complete the micro-level analysis and share their findings with us for a third-party review.)

If, as we suspect, the revised studies demonstrate that the proposed development will exacerbate the dangerous congestion that currently exists at the intersection of North Washington Street and First Street, we ask that the Planning Commission direct the applicant to revise and resubmit its application for the Commission's review and consideration. We further request that the Commission advise the applicant to consider design alternatives that could potentially mitigate the problems identified in this review. In particular, the applicant should be directed to explore the mitigating effect of relocating the garage and loading dock entrances and exits away from First Street.

A Note of Appreciation

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to several experts in the field of traffic capacity analysis who helped to make VISION's review of Edens' Traffic Impact Study possible. Although all of the original research included in this review was conducted by myself, a Ph.D. with experience in statistical analysis and micro- and macro-modeling techniques, this work benefited enormously from my consultations with three individuals:

- Lily Elefteriadou, Ph.D.
 - Professor of Civil Engineering and Director of the Transportation Research Center, University of Florida
 - Chair, Highway Capacity and Quality of Services Committee of the Transportation Research Board (National Academy of Sciences)
- Brandon Nevers
 - Senior Principal Engineer, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
 - Co-chair, Transportation Research Board Intersection Joint Subcommittee
- Evelyn Beyer
 - Manager of Technical Support, Trafficware, Inc. (maker of Synchro)

⁹ City of Alexandria, *Transportation Planning Administrative Guidelines* (March 25, 2013), p. 4.

Finally, I conclude this letter with a quote from Alexandria's *Transportation Planning Administrative Guidelines*:

It is a goal of the City of Alexandria to create an integrated, multimodal transportation system that is accessible and safe for all users. For Alexandria to maintain its attractiveness as a place to live, work and play, traffic impacts associated with new development must be minimized.¹⁰

This is a lofty goal, but it can only be achieved with the aid of the most up-to-date methods for evaluating the potential impacts of new developments. Absent that, we are all on fool's errand.

My most sincere thanks to the Planning Commission members for their service,

Darrel W. Drury

Darrel W. Drury, Ph.D.
President, VISION

Attachment

¹⁰ City of Alexandria, *Transportation Planning Administrative Guidelines* (March 25, 2013), p. 3.

letter in support of 530 First Street Project

MPA2015-0009/DSUP2015-0019
ABC/Giant - Edens
Additional Materials

fibre space <info@fibrespace.com>

Tue 3/1/2016 3:52 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>;

I am writing to state my support for the 530 First Street Project. I am both a resident and retail business owner in the City of Alexandria. I can speak to our desperate need for retail anchors in Old Town and Old Town North, as well as public spaces that might attract visitors from the DC region to our town to spend money.

This development will create a retail anchor in North Old Town, which is badly needed and also part of our Small Area Plan for that community. In addition, Eden is a well regarded developer with several other successful projects in the DC Region. Currently a portion of this land is tax free, as it is occupied by a state run retail establishment. This project will generate \$2.5 million in tax revenue for our city as well as provide 151 full time jobs. The project also has ample parking for visitors to the property and its residents!

I urge the planning commission to support this development.

Regards,

Danielle Romanetti
fibre space | fibrespace.com
1219 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
phone 703-664-0344 | Instagram fibrespace
