

**Pre-Application Meeting Project Narrative  
2277 Research Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland  
Major Amendment to Use Permit No. 86-00368**

On behalf of PA/MD NNN Office Research, LLC (the “Applicant”), we respectfully submit this Application for Pre-Application Meeting (“PAM”) in connection with a future Major Amendment to Use Permit No. 86-000368 application (the “Use Permit”) for redevelopment of a portion of the office park complex located at 2277 Research Boulevard in Rockville, Maryland (the “Property”).

The Property is currently improved with three (3) office buildings totaling approximately 434,000 square feet of gross floor area, ±1,464 ancillary surface parking spaces, and landscape improvements. The Applicant intends to submit for a Major Amendment to Use Permit 86-00368 in order to: (a) demolish one (1) office building to allow for development of up to 133 townhouse and/or two-over-two dwelling units as part of Phase 1A; (b) retain 284,739 square feet of office uses in the remaining two (2) office buildings; and (c) conversion of approximately 10,800 square feet of ground floor office space to restaurant uses as part of Phase 1B (collectively, the “Application”).

The Property is currently zoned MXE (Mixed-Use Employment), within Planning Area 15 of the August 2, 2021, approved Rockville 2040: Comprehensive Plan Update (the “Comprehensive Plan”). The Comprehensive Plan identifies the Property as Area 3 of the Fallsgrove and Research Boulevard Planning Area, and designates the Property for Office, Commercial and Residential Mix (OCRM) land uses (Comprehensive Plan, p. 387). The Comprehensive Plan specifically states that “Areas 1 through 3 are planned for mixed-use development ... encouraging a mix of office, commercial, and/or residential uses,” and recommends providing “amenities and uses that would support and complement office and commercial uses in the area.” (Comprehensive Plan, p.388). As described below, the Application proposes to introduce residential uses, restaurant space, and public open space in place of underutilized office uses and surface parking, which will better complement and support the two (2) remaining office buildings and employment uses along the Research Boulevard corridor.

The major amendment to the Use Permit proposes the following elements for approval (hereinafter, the “Project”):

- Redevelopment of the Property to replace one (1) outdated and underutilized office building and ±618 ancillary surface parking spaces with 52 townhouse dwelling units and 61 two over two market-rate dwelling units (plus 20 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units – “MPDUs”), streetscape improvements, restaurant uses (up to 10,800 square feet of converted lobby space), and open space and amenity areas. Townhouse dwelling units, two over two dwelling units (multiple dwelling units), office uses, and restaurant uses are all permitted uses in the MXE Zone pursuant to Sections 25.13.03.a and 25.13.03. h of the City of Rockville Zoning (the “Zoning Ordinance”); and
- As described in greater detail below, the Project’s inclusion of residential uses satisfies the MXE Zone’s special regulations because such residential uses are recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.

Pursuant to Section 25.05.07(d) of the Zoning Ordinance, Phase 1A and 1B will result in comprehensive changes to approximately 45.10% of the overall Property area and can be processed as a Major amendment to the Use Permit. Since the Use Permit was originally approved administratively at a staff level, the proposed Major amendment to the Use Permit will be reviewed and approved by the City’s chief of zoning.

The replacement of one (1) office building (±135,000 square feet of GFA) and conversion of portions of the ground-floor in the two (2) remaining office buildings with up to 133 dwelling units and restaurant uses (±10,800 square feet) is anticipated to generate up to 9 additional vehicle trips during the PM peak hour. Therefore, a full Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR) will not be required. The Applicant will submit a CTR Scoping Intake Form detailing the trip generation reduction, and an On-Site assessment will be prepared and submitted to support the Application, consistent with the requirements outlined in the City’s CTR Guidelines.

The Project will further many of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations and comply with applicable development standards for the MXE Zone and special design regulations as set forth in Sections 25.13.05.b.1 and 25.13.06.c of the Zoning Ordinance below:

#### **Comprehensive Plan**

- *The Research Boulevard corridor should remain focused on employment-generating office and commercial development, with some flexibility.* (Comprehensive Plan p.

388).

The Comprehensive Plan evaluated the Property, and the surrounding mix of employment uses carefully, and determined that the Research Boulevard Corridor should remain an employment node, with some exceptions. As explained in greater detail below, the Comprehensive Plan designated the Property (and two (2) other sites) for additional flexibility to allow for the introduction of residential uses. The Project furthers the Comprehensive Plan's land use designation of Office, Commercial, Residential Mix by introducing a mix of residential and restaurant uses to complement the predominantly office uses on the Property.

- *To provide amenities and uses that would support and complement office and commercial uses in the area. (Comprehensive Plan, p. 388)*

In recognition that the Comprehensive Plan designates the Property for a mix of uses that will support and complement the existing office uses, the Applicant is proposing to add residential dwelling units, restaurant space, streetscape improvements, and public open space through the Project. The introduction of these new uses and amenities will help to create a sense of place at the Property and transform the existing 8-hour office park environment into a vibrant 18-hour environment activated by a mix of uses and open spaces.

- *Redevelopment of property in this area should contribute toward a pedestrian-oriented, urban-scale streetscape. New developments should orient primary building facades and front doors toward a street or public open space to frame the edges of streets, parks, and open spaces, and to foster activated pedestrian areas. Building frontages should include ground-floor uses that attract customers or regular visitors, enhanced pedestrian areas and amenities, attractive landscaping, and bicycle infrastructure. (Comprehensive Plan, p. 388)*

The Project will introduce pedestrian-oriented streetscape improvements and public open spaces, which will be activated by the proposed residential and restaurant uses. The replacement of underutilized ground floor office space with sit down restaurant uses that are framed by upgraded streetscape, landscape, and open spaces will create a more attractive environment for employees, residents, and customers. The Project will provide safe and efficient pedestrian connections between the residential units and commercial uses to ensure that the mix of uses complement each

other.

### **MXE Zone Development Standards**

As delineated in the development standards table included on PAM Sheet 1 of 3, the Project complies with the applicable development standards in Section 25.13.05.b.1. The Application also satisfies the special design regulations of the MXE Zone, as described below.

#### *Section 25.13.07. – Special design regulations for individual mixed-use zones*

As described below, the Project satisfies all of the special design regulations applicable to the MXE Zone under Section 25.13.07.c of the Zoning Ordinance:

1. *Building location.* Where recommended by the plan, buildings in the MXE zone should be located close to the front property line or at a build-to line (vis-à-vis, a service drive) where established by the plan.

Response: As illustrated on the conceptual layout, the Applicant is proposing to locate the new residential units and restaurant uses along public and private streets, and new open spaces.

2. *Uses by floor.* The ground floor may contain retail and other commercial uses along those streets designated in the plan as major pedestrian spines. The upper floors may be additional retail, office, residential, or a combination of uses.

Response: The Project proposes to replace the ground floor portion of both office buildings with active, sit-down restaurant space along the primary access point to the Project.

3. *Facade.* Along the front lot line, the building facade is normally a minimum of twenty (20) feet high. 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 facade wall.

Response: The proposed townhouse and 2 over 2 dwelling units will satisfy this design standard.

4. *Sidewalks.* Where sidewalks must be built new or rebuilt as part of redevelopment, they should comply with the provisions of section 25.17.05.

Response: Sidewalks are proposed along the new public and private streets that will serve the Project.

5. *Parking.* On-site parking must comply with the standards and requirements of article 16. Most

parking should be located to the side or in the rear of the buildings. Structured parking, either above or below grade, is preferred. Any parking structure facades visible from the street or a transitway must be treated in a similar manner as the primary building facades. All parking must be screened to prevent vehicle headlights from shining into adjoining residential properties.

Response: The Project relies on the existing surface parking facilities to serve the mix of office and restaurant uses and proposes new parking spaces for the residential units. As described in the parking reduction request attached as Exhibit "A", the Applicant is requesting a reduction in the minimum number of required parking spaces pursuant to Section 25.16.03.h.1. More specifically, the Applicant is requesting a  $\pm 23.8\%$  reduction as applied to the commercial uses (office and restaurant) under the City's shared parking methodology (Section 25.26.03(h)(6)). While the City's Zoning Ordinance establishes a parking ratio of 3.3 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet for office uses, the parking reduction request notes that the observed parking demand for the existing office uses is 1.58 spaces per 1,000 square feet. The parking reduction request takes a conservative approach and recommends a parking ratio of 1.66 spaces per 1,000 square feet of office uses and the Zoning Ordinance's standard ratio for the proposed 10,800 square feet of restaurant uses. Based on this approach, a total of 558 parking spaces would be required to serve the mix of commercial uses in Phase 1B. However, there are a total of 789 parking spaces available to serve the mix of commercial uses. As detailed in Exhibit "A", there is a good cause shown to reduce the parking ratio for the Project's commercial uses based on the demonstrated parking demand that exists today and the City's shared parking methodology. The Applicant intends to process this parking waiver for Planning Commission review concurrent with the Major amendment to the Use Permit that will be reviewed and acted on by the Chief of Zoning.

*6. Special regulations for residential development in the MXE zone.*

(a) Residential uses may be allowed in those areas recommended for such uses in the relevant plan, or where the Mayor and Council or the Planning Commission, as the case may be, determines that the use is compatible with adjoining and confronting uses by means of landscaping, screening, or other measures. In this case, residential development is limited to townhouses, multi-unit, or live-work units. Ground floor retail uses primarily intended to serve the residents may be included.

(b) Residential uses are permitted in buildings containing principally office uses, but are limited

to no more than twenty (20) percent of the gross floor area.

(c) In order to maintain compatibility, residential uses other than live-work units are not permitted in buildings that house primarily service industrial or other primarily industrial uses.

Response: The Project is permitted to include residential uses under subsection (a) because the Comprehensive Plan specifically states that “Areas 1 through 3 are planned for mixed-use development ... encouraging a mix of office, commercial, and/or residential uses.” (Comprehensive Plan, p. 388). In addition to the foregoing, the two (2) office buildings that are proposed to remain will include ground floor restaurant space intended to serve both office employees and residents of the Project.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Project will replace and upgrade an outdated and underutilized office building with infill residential units, restaurant uses, streetscape improvements, and public open spaces that will further Comprehensive Plan’s vision for the Property.

Respectfully submitted,

**SELZER GURVITCH RABIN WERTHEIMER &  
POLOTT, P.C.**

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By: \_\_\_\_\_

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