

February 13, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Susan Eddy  
Deputy Planning Director  
City Hall  
301 King Street, Suite 2100  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

RE: Eisenhower West Framework Plan

Dear Susan:

My client VF III Eisenhower (the "Owner"), is the owner of 5150 and 5200 Eisenhower Avenue (the "Property"). The Owner is a party to the agreement for consultant services with the City to fund the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan planning effort and is an active participant in the planning process. On behalf of the Owner, I am following up on our prior meetings concerning the draft Eisenhower West Framework Plan recommendations for the Property.

As we discussed at our prior meetings on December 15, 2014, January 26, 2015 and articulated to planning staff at this week's community meeting, the Owner strongly objects to the Framework Plan's graphic depiction of the boulevard style green space bisecting the Property. The boulevard style green space paired with Eisenhower Avenue as a "great street" severely limits the block size available for future development and has the following negative impacts on the planning goals and development opportunities:

1. The boulevard style green space is the only green space in the Framework Plan that is not associated with a natural feature.
2. The smaller block sizes limit opportunity for larger format office and hotel development on the Property.
3. The smaller block sizes limits the amount of underground parking that can be accommodated on the Property. As discussed with staff, the maximum viable depth for an underground parking garage is 5-6 stories. By reducing the block size and thereby limiting the available parking spaces, the Owner will not be able to develop the Property with the density that is appropriate for a property that is in close proximity to the Van Dorn Metro Station.

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4. The boulevard style green space is a detriment to retail tenants. As discussed with staff, retail tenants desire close proximity to other retail tenants and maximum visibility from multiple angles. Separating the retail tenants with a boulevard style green space with only oblique views from the Metro Station is not a strategy for a successful retail environment.
5. The boulevard style green spaces is a suburban planning concept that is not necessary or appropriate for the Property and will leave the Property in an island between Eisenhower Avenue as a future great street and the unnecessarily wide boulevard style green space.
6. The attendees to Community Meeting #2 preferred pedestrian and bicycle paths to "civic plazas" by a 2-1 margin. The boulevard approach fits neither category.
7. The boulevard style green space will also be a green space to nowhere for the foreseeable future with little to no traffic. The property to the east of Property is developed with residential units and the properties to the west are under fractional ownership and not likely to be redeveloped. If the City insists on the current draft of the Framework Plan, the boulevard style green space will be bookended by the current uses and will not provide any tangible benefits.

For these reasons, the negative impacts of the boulevard style green space far outweigh the marginal benefit associated with an isolated green space that will rarely be used by the very residents and tenants it is intended to serve.

Please know, however, that the Owner strongly supports a viable green space component for the future development proposal for the Property. The Owner believes that an urban style park area integrated with a future development plan is a far more successful strategy for the development of the Property. As such, I request that the boulevard green space be removed from the Framework Plan and that the eventual planning text for the Eisenhower West Small Area Plan recommend an urban open space area for the properties in close proximity to the Metro Station and that can be fully evaluated and judged at the time of rezoning. The Owner would like to resolve this issue with planning staff in advance of the upcoming Planning Commission and City Council work sessions in March.

Please let me know if you have any question regarding the issues raised in this letter or the requested change to the Framework Plan.

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Wire

cc: Larry Horowitz, VF III Eisenhower  
Karl Moritz, Planning Director