

Docket Item # 9-A
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT #2002-0001
REZONING #2002-0001
PRESTON CONDOMINIUM AND TOWNHOMES

Planning Commission Meeting
April 2, 2002

ISSUE: Consideration of a request for a master plan amendment to change the land use designation and request for rezoning of the subject property from RB/Residential and CSL/Commercial Service Low to CRMU-M/Commercial Residential Mixed Use, Medium, with proffer.

APPLICANT: A & A Limited Partnership
by Duncan W. Blair, attorney

LOCATION: 111 East Reed Avenue

CITY COUNCIL ACTION, APRIL 13, 2002: City Council approved the recommendation of the Planning Commission.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, APRIL 2, 2002: On a motion by Mr. Wagner, seconded by Mr. Gaines, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the request, subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason: The Planning Commission generally agreed with the staff analysis. Mr. Dunn introduced a motion to recommend approval with revised language to provide a clear rationale as to why this rezoning does not establish a precedent for future rezonings along Rt. 1. Mr. Wagner introduced a substitute motion incorporating Mr. Dunn's motion and adding additional language in the Master Plan Resolution that the proposed rezoning is specific to this property and that it is not intended to establish a precedent for future rezonings in the Rt. 1 corridor.

Speakers:

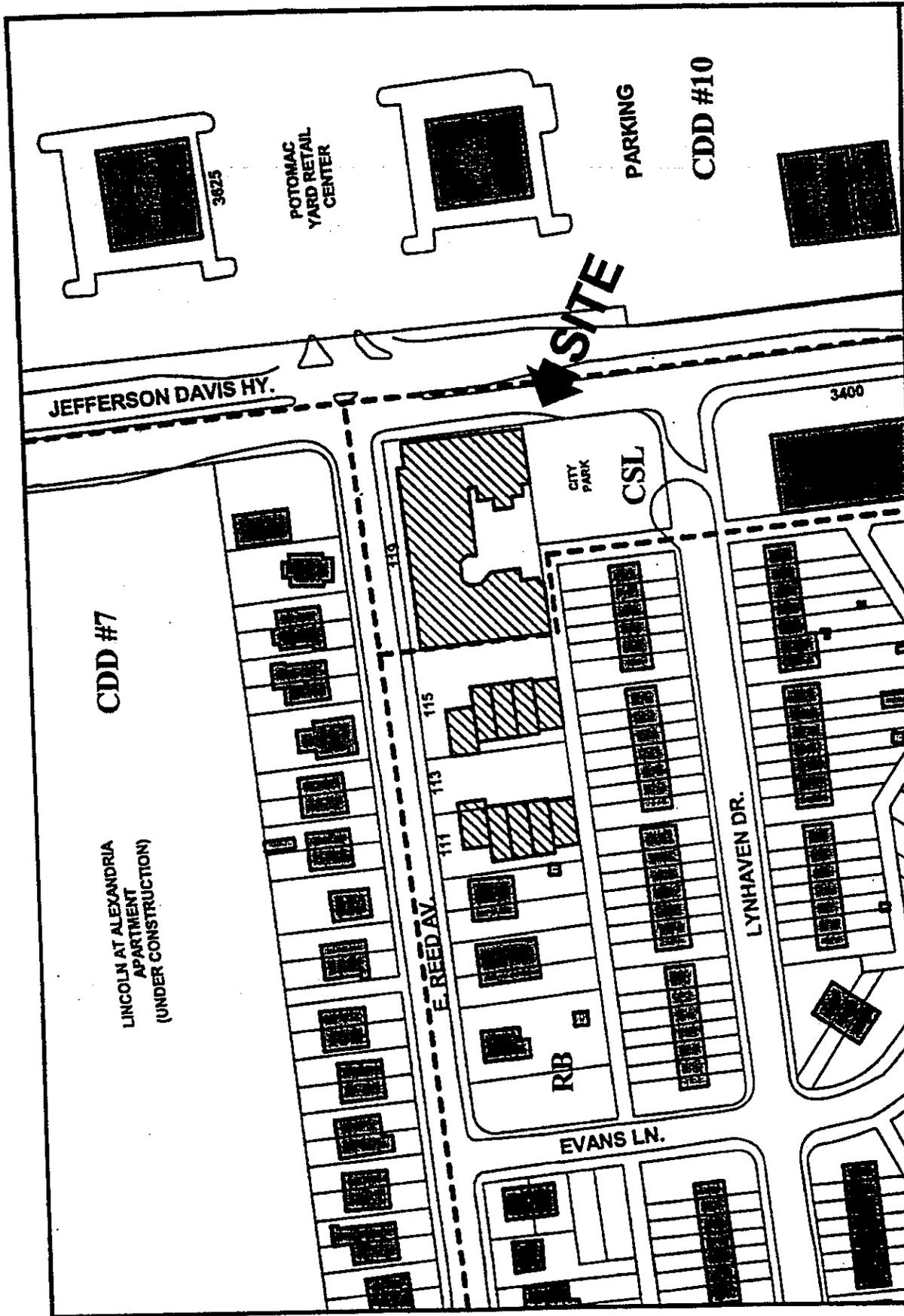
Duncan Blair, attorney, representing the applicant.

Harold Brooks, Hume Springs Civic Association, spoke in support of the application

Amy Slack, Del Ray Citizens, spoke in support of the application and lauded the applicant's efforts to meet early with citizen groups.

Richard Nobbe, spoke in support of the application.

Ruby Tucker, Lynhaven Citizen Association, spoke in support of the application and requested that the Planning Commission amend Staff condition #14 to prohibit the removal of any parking spaces from the City Park.



04/04/02

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SUMMARY

The applicant, A&A Limited Partnership, is requesting approval of an amendment to the Potomac West small area plan section of the master plan and a rezoning to change the designation of 111-115 and 119 East Reed Avenue from RB-Residential Townhouse and CSL-Commercial Service Low and to CRMU-M-Commercial Residential Mixed Use-Medium and to change the height limit to 60', with a proffer limiting development to the specific plan for condominium and townhouse units being proposed in conjunction with the rezoning (DSUP#2002-001).

The property consists of four lots of record totaling 50,065 square feet (1.149 acres) on the southwestern corner of Jefferson Davis Highway and East Reed Avenue. The eastern portion of the site, currently zoned CSL, is 27,167 square feet and is occupied by a vacant commercial building. The western portion of the site, currently zoned RB and designated at RM-Residential Medium in the master plan, contains 22,898 square feet and is developed as a surface parking lot.

As discussed in more detail in the staff report for the development application (DSUP#2002-001), staff is supporting the proposed residential development because the redevelopment is appropriate along Route 1, and because we believe the project is well designed, provides appropriate transitions to the surrounding community and will be an asset to the neighborhood. Nonetheless, the request for master plan amendment and rezoning to CRMU-M does raise fundamental issues with regard to the City's land use policies at two different levels: one, is an increase in density appropriate at this location; and two, is the CRMU-M zone in specific appropriate?.

Staff has concluded that the proposed increase in density is appropriate at this location because:

- 1) The site is located along a major arterial, U.S. Route 1/Jefferson Davis Highway and the bulk of the density is massed toward the highway;
- 2) The site is across Jefferson Davis Highway from Potomac Yard, a Coordinated Development District approved for moderate to high density office, retail and residential uses, including along Jefferson Davis Highway;
- 3) The site is located south of a site zoned for moderate to high density mixed use development, known as the Route 1 Properties CDD (albeit most of the site has already been redeveloped under conventional zoning);
- 4) The site provides a transition and buffer between the more intense development in Potomac Yard and traffic of Route

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- 1 to existing lower scale residential uses located to the west and;
- 5) Internally, the site has been developed to provide an on-site transition between the higher density use and the existing lower density uses on the adjacent properties.

The 1992 Master Plan and current zoning largely created a holding pattern for the properties along the west side of Jefferson Davis Highway, most likely in recognition that the redevelopment of the surrounding development tracts, particularly the Potomac Yard, would ultimately drive the character of Jefferson Davis Highway and help define the appropriate character of the western side of Jefferson Davis Highway. Now that a concept plan has been approved for Potomac Yard, the future character of the eastern side of Jefferson Davis Highway has been established, and that character will be much denser and more urban in nature. This proposed master plan amendment and rezoning will allow the subject property to redevelop in a pattern consistent with this future redevelopment of Potomac Yard, while maintaining appropriate transitions to the lower scale neighborhoods further to the west.

Staff is not convinced that CRMU-M is ultimately the appropriate zone for this site or for other parcels along the western side of Jefferson Davis Highway, because there is no other CRMU-M zoning in the immediate area. Conceptually, an extension of the adjoining CDD zoning would be more appropriate, however CDD was not designed for relatively small sites such as those along Jefferson Davis Highway. Alternatively, staff believes it would be appropriate to create a new overlay zone along Jefferson Davis Highway aimed at facilitating urban redevelopment of the western edge of the corridor in keeping with the approved plan for the eastern side. However, it is not possible to design and adopt an entire new zone for the Route 1 corridor in the context of this single development proposal; the entire corridor must be studied before a new zone can be formulated.

Therefore, staff has concluded that utilizing the CRMU-M zone, with a proffer to the plan, is a reasonable approach for this site as a means of facilitating this redevelopment of Route 1. The CRMU-M zone is probably the most similar to CDD, promoting high-quality mixed use development and, with the proposed proffer, the zone is effectively much more controlled than CRMU-M might generally allow.

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The plan assures that the bulk of the density is located directly adjacent to Jefferson Davis Highway and that appropriate transitions in scale and density are provided between the condominium building and the established lower scale neighborhoods. The plan also assures building design that is urban in character, high in quality and compatible with the existing community. The subject property is quite unusual relative to other properties along the western side of Jefferson Davis Highway because it has significant depth. Other properties along the street are typically much shallower, and will have much more difficulty in achieving the mass and scale of this proposal while still providing appropriate transitions to adjacent homes. Therefore, it is critical that this rezoning to CRMU-M not be viewed as a precedent for the rezoning of properties along Jefferson Davis Highway, but rather serve as an impetus for devising a new zone that provides for density only where transitions such as those provided by this development plan are provided.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed rezoning and master plan amendment from RB and CSL to the following proffer:

The use and development of the property shall be in accordance with the Development Special Use Permit Site Plan file number DSUP 2002-001 as approved by the Alexandria Planning Commission and City Council and in compliance with conditions of approval and code requirements.

Staff recommends **denial** of the proposed increase in height limit for the property to 60 feet.

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DISCUSSION:

The applicant, A&A Limited Partnership, is requesting approval of an amendment to the Potomac West small area plan section of the master plan and a rezoning to change the designation of 119 East Reed Avenue from CSL-Commercial Service Low and 111-115 East Reed Avenue from RB-Residential Townhouse to CRMU-M-Commercial Residential Mixed Use-Medium and to change the height limit from 45'-50' to 60'. In conjunction with this proposal, the applicant requests approval of a development special use permit (DSUP2002-0001), with site plan, to construct a condominium building and ten fee-simple townhomes. The applicant is also requesting several zoning modifications and special use permit approvals to develop the site as proposed.

The property contains four separate parcels: a 27,167 sq.ft. parcel zoned CSL which contains the former National Car Rental building facing Jefferson Davis Highway, and three additional parcels containing a total of 22,898 sq.ft. located along Reed Avenue behind the National Car Rental building, which are occupied by a surface parking lot. The development proposal for the site provides a 106,846 sq.ft., 53 unit condominium building on the portion of the site now occupied by the existing building and 10 townhouse units on the portion of the site now devoted to surface parking. The increased height proposed for this development would allow the applicant to provide a tower element on the condominium building at the corner of Jefferson Davis Highway and East Reed Avenue.

The applicant proposes to rezone the property to CRMU-M. The table below provides a comparison of the proposed CRMU-M zoning with the existing CSL and RB zoning, and also provides a summary of project characteristics.

Comparison of Proposed Development With Existing and Proposed Zoning

	CRMU-M	Proposed Development	CSL	RB
Maximum FAR	2.0 (w/ SUP)	1.80 (overall) 2.37 (condo) 1.11 (townhomes)	0.75	0.75
Maximum Height	45-50 feet ¹	50' (condo) 40' (townhomes)	50 feet	45 feet
Maximum Number of Units	N/A	55/acre (overall) 85/acre (condo) 19/acre (townhomes)	27/acre (multifamily) 22/acre (town home)	22/acre
Minimum Open	40%	Total Open Space ² Ground Floor Open	40%	800sf/du

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Space		Space		
		36.2% (overall)	29.3% (overall)	
		35.8% (condo)	23.2% (condo)	
		36.6% (townhomes)	36.6% (townhomes)	

¹The maximum height for the CRMU-M zone is designated in the small area plan.

²In addition, the applicant also proposes to provide 2,180 square feet of interior recreational amenity in the condominium building.

The existing CSL and RB zoning of the property mirrors the surrounding zoning to the west and south. All of the properties along the northern edge of Jefferson Davis Highway are zoned CSL, which allows relatively low scale and low intensity commercial uses, similar to those that currently exist along the highway. The surrounding residential communities are primarily zoned RB and are developed as relatively modest sized two-story townhomes and single family homes.

Whereas the zoning to the west and south is low scale and low density, and reflective of the existing character of the neighborhood, properties have been zoned CDD/Coordinated Development District, a zone intended to foster higher density redevelopment, to the immediate north and to the east. Redevelopment to the north has largely occurred, albeit not in the coordinated urban manner envisioned by the small area plan and CDD zoning. Rather, the northern tract, known as Route 1 Properties, has redeveloped with a car dealership and with a higher density residential development which is more suburban than urban in character. The only portion of the Route 1 Properties remaining to be redeveloped are the residential properties along the north side of Reed Avenue. A recent planning effort for those parcels has produced a report (Upper Potomac West Task Force Report) which envisions redevelopment of the 46 existing single family units on the north side of Reed Avenue. The report recommended a variety of possible housing types such as traditional townhouses with rear loaded parking, townhouse mews or stacked townhouses all of which will require a significant higher density zoning than the existing RB zoning.

To the east of the subject property is Potomac Yard, one of the City's major redevelopment tracts. While the portion of the Yard directly across the street from this proposed project is now developed as a retail center with a suburban form and is likely to remain a shopping center for at least ten to twenty years, the remainder of the tract has been approved for a more urban form of redevelopment. Along the eastern side of Jefferson Davis Highway, the Potomac Yard plan provides for primarily commercial development, at a moderate scale (primarily 50') with an urban character.

As the preceding description of surrounding uses and potential development illustrates, the scale and character of development envisioned by plans and permitted by zoning for the east and north portions of Jefferson Davis Highway are dramatically different from the existing uses along the western side of the corridor, and the subject property sits at the juxtaposition of these two divergent areas. Essentially, the 1992 Master Plan and zoning for the western side of the corridor created a holding pattern for the properties along the west side of Jefferson Davis

Highway; most likely in recognition that the redevelopment of the Route 1 Properties and Potomac Yard would occur in advance of any redevelopment of the corridor and would ultimately drive the character of Jefferson Davis Highway and help to define the appropriate character for the western edge of the corridor. Now that a concept plan has been approved for Potomac Yard, the future character of the eastern side of Jefferson Davis Highway has been established.

Staff Recommendation

Staff believes the proposed project is in keeping with the vision for Jefferson Davis Highway which has been established by the Potomac Yard Plan. While ideally a plan for the entire corridor would be developed by the city in conjunction with the community before rezoning of any properties along Jefferson Davis Highway took place, such a process would take a significant length of time and might result in the loss of this opportunity for redevelopment of the parcel. Staff believes such a loss would be unfortunate, as this project is well designed, will bring significant benefit to the city, and will establish a positive model for future redevelopment along the western side of the corridor. Therefore, staff is supporting the master plan amendment and rezoning to CRMU-M to facilitate the redevelopment of this single parcel.

Staff is not convinced that CRMU-M is ultimately the appropriate zone for this site or for other parcels along the western side of Jefferson Davis Highway, because there is no other CRMU-M zoning in the immediate area. Conceptually, an extension of the adjoining CDD zoning would be more appropriate, however CDD was not designed for relatively small sites such as those along Jefferson Davis Highway. Alternatively, staff believes it would be appropriate to create a new overlay zone for along Jefferson Davis Highway aimed at facilitating urban redevelopment of the western edge of the corridor in keeping with the approved plan for the eastern side. However, it is not possible to design and adopt an entire new zone for the Route 1 corridor in the context of this single development proposal; the entire corridor must be studied before a new zone can be formulated. Therefore, staff has concluded that utilizing the CRMU-M zone, with a proffer to the plan, is a reasonable approach for this site as a means of facilitating this redevelopment of Route 1. The CRMU-M zone is probably the most similar to CDD, promoting high-quality mixed use development, and with the proposed proffer, the zone is effectively much more controlled than CRMU-M might generally allow.

As previously noted, staff is supporting this rezoning in advance of a comprehensive study because the proposed project will bring significant benefit to the city and serve as a model for redevelopment. More specifically, the project provides:

- 1) For redevelopment of a building which has remained vacant for some time;

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- 2) A high quality of architectural design in an urban form consistent with future redevelopment of Potomac Yard, including the provision of underground parking for the condominium building;
- 3) An improved streetscape along Jefferson Davis Highway and Reed Avenue, including provision of a wider sidewalk and street trees;
- 4) Home ownership units, including six affordable home-ownership units (9.5% of the total units);
- 5) Improvements to the public park immediately to the south of the development parcel.

In addition, the project has been designed in a manner that provides appropriate transitions in mass and scale to the surrounding residences. The condominium buildings steps down in height toward the existing residences, and the townhouse units at the western end of the site create a transition in scale between the larger condominium building on Route 1 and the residences in the neighborhood.

While it is anticipated that other properties along the western edge of Route 1 may ultimately be rezoned by the City to foster redevelopment, it is unlikely that CRMU-M is appropriate. However, it is expected that other properties along Route 1 may be rezoned to an entirely new zoning designation, which would foster urban redevelopment similar in character with the future Potomac Yard. Therefore, the use of this CRMU zone on this property can be viewed as an interim step in the master plan/rezoning process, with the ultimate zone being designed in conjunction with a planning study of the corridor.

Proposed Increase In Height from 45'-50' to 60'

A second element of the applicant's request has been to increase the current height limits in the master plan, which are 50' for the parcel on Jefferson Davis Highway and 45' for the interior parcels, to 60'.

While most of the proposed project is 45' to 50' in height, the additional height is requested in order to allow a tower element at the corner of Jefferson Davis Highway and Reed Avenue, marking the entrance to the building as well as the entrance to what will be the more urban portion of Jefferson Davis Highway in the future.

Staff believes the tower element is a desirable feature of the building design; however, we do not support a general increase in height to 60' because we do not believe that 60' is generally the

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appropriate height for along the western side of Jefferson Davis Highway. While some additional height may be appropriate at limited locations, the 50' height limit is more consistent with the existing neighborhood and with the majority of new buildings that will be constructed at Potomac Yard. Therefore we do not support a change in the master plan height limits. Rather, we propose that the applicant utilize the zoning ordinances provisions allowing a height bonus in exchange for affordable housing as a means of achieving the 58' foot tower. The increase in height is for a relatively small portion of the building, and staff believes the 8' is a reasonable bonus in exchange for the six affordable housing units being provided, as the subsidy the developer is providing for the six units is equal to twice the value of the typical \$0.50 per square foot contribution made to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

STAFF: Eileen Fogarty, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;
Kimberley Johnson, Chief, Development;
Gregory Tate, Urban Planner;
Leslie Parrish, Urban Planner.

RESOLUTION NO. MPA 2002-0001

WHEREAS, under the Provisions of Section 9.05 of the City Charter, the Planning Commission may adopt amendments to the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria and submit to the City Council such revisions in said plans as changing conditions may make necessary; and

WHEREAS, an application for amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan was filed with the Department of Planning and Zoning on December 14, 2001 for changes in the land use designations to the parcels at 111-119 East Reed Avenue; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Zoning has analyzed the proposed revision and presented its recommendations to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, a duly advertised public hearing on the proposed amendment was held on April 2, 2002 with all public testimony and written comment considered; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that:

1. While generally an amendment of this nature would be problematic, the proposed amendment is constructive and desirable in this specific location to guide and accomplish the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the City; and

2. In this case the proposed amendment in conjunction with the proffered rezoning plan to produce a result that is generally consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the 1992 Master Plan and with the specific goals and objectives set forth in the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan; and

3. The proposed amendment and in conjunction with the proffered rezoning is consistent with the Planning Commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the Potomac West Small Area Plan; and

4. Based on the foregoing findings and all other facts and circumstances of which the Planning Commission may properly take

notice in making and adopting a master plan for the City of Alexandria, adoption of the amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the residents of the City for this specific location and in this particular circumstance;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Alexandria that:

1. The following amendment is hereby adopted in its entirety as an amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia in accordance with Section 9.05 of the Charter of the City of Alexandria, Virginia:

Change the designation of parcel at 119 East Reed Avenue from CSL/Commercial Service Low to CRMU-M/Commercial Residential Mixed Use - Medium and the parcels at 111, 113 and 115 East Reed Avenue from RB/Townhouse Zone to CRMU-M/Commercial Residential Mixed Use - Medium.

2. This resolution shall be signed by the Chairman of the Planning Commission and attested by its secretary, and a true copy of this resolution forwarded and certified to the City Council.

ADOPTED the 2nd day of April, 2002.

Eric Wagner, Chairman

ATTEST:

Eileen P. Fogarty, Secretary