

**Commonwealth Place at Westfields
Special Exception for Sign Modification
SE-2023-SU-00043
Statement of Justification**

July 18, 2024

I. INTRODUCTION

Toll Mid-Atlantic LP Company, Inc. (the "**Applicant**") seeks approval of a Special Exception for Sign Modifications (the "**SE**") to emulate the permanent and temporary signage previously approved in Land Bay D for the residential uses to be constructed in Land Bay A of the mixed-use development known as Commonwealth Centre ("**Commonwealth Centre**"). Situated on approximately 4.65 acres of land in the Sully District, Tax Map Parcel 44-1 ((01)) 6C2 (the "**Property**") is south of Newbrook Drive, north of Sully Road (Route 28), and west of Westfields Boulevard (Route 662), an including an offsite temporary sign on Tax Map Parcel 44-1 ((01)) 6D ("**Parcel 6D**"). The Property is zoned Planned Development Commercial District ("**PDC**") and located within the Water Supply Protection Overlay District. With sales efforts commencing imminently on the 81 multi-family triplex residential units, branded Commonwealth Place at Westfields (the "**Commonwealth Place at Westfields**"), the Applicant would benefit from approval of this SE to imitate those signs previously approved (and detailed below) for the Field at Commonwealth (CSPA-2006-SU-025-02).

II. BACKGROUND

The Property was subject to Comprehensive Sign Plan CSP-2006-SU-025 approved by the Planning Commission on February 18, 2009, for the commercial mixed-use development known as Commonwealth Centre (the "**Original CSP**"). The Original CSP provided guidance for the location, size, and material of various hotel, retail, office, direction, and regulatory signs for the 97.60 acre development.

This Original CSP remained unchanged until November 16, 2017, when the Planning Commission approved Comprehensive Sign Plan Amendment CSPA-2006-SU-025 (the "**Amended CSP**") which still governs the non-residential signage within Commonwealth Centre (including the Property – although no longer approved for non-residential uses).

As the region continued to grow and evolve, it became apparent that in order to enhance this portion of the Dulles Suburban Center as a more vibrant, 24-hour mixed use center for living, working, shopping, and entertaining as the County's Comprehensive Plan envisioned, Commonwealth Centre had to introduce residential uses into the mix of uses permitted. Consequently, the Board of Supervisors approved the deletion of permitted but unbuilt portions of non-residential development in Land Bay D (in 2018) and Land Bay A (in 2021) and approved the development of residential uses. The Property, which is located within Land Bay A, is subject to Conceptual Development Plan Amendment CDPA 2006-SU-025-03 (the "**CDPA**") and Proffered Condition Amendment PCA 2016-SU-025-05 (the "**PCA**") (with Final Development Plan Amendment FDPA 2006-SU-025-05 (the "**FDPA**"), retroactively approved by the Planning Commission as of July 28, 2021, collectively the "**Entitlements**") that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved on October 19, 2021.

The approval of residential uses within Commonwealth Centre introduced a use category that was not contemplated or addressed in the Amended CSP. Therefore, in 2020 the Planning Commission approved Comprehensive Sign Plan Amendment CSPA 2006-SU-025-02 (the “**Land Bay D CSPA**”) to permit a minimal number of permanent monument signs – signage that is regionally associated with residential communities and a handful of temporary banner signs. Note that the Land Bay D CSPA is only applicable to the residential portion of Land Bay D and no other portion of Commonwealth Centre, and most importantly did not carry forward the Amended CSP. It was processed and approved as a stand-alone CSPA.

This SE simply seeks to permit those sign types previously approved with the Land Bay D CSPA, with minor modifications, in Commonwealth Place at Westfields. It seeks approval of a stand-alone SE to replace the previously approved signage for non-residential uses on the Property with those appropriate for a small community of multi-family triplex residential units. Carrying forward the Amended CSP is not appropriate given (i) the Property’s Entitlements do not permit non-residential development and (ii) residential signage provisions are not addressed. Therefore, processing this application as a stand-alone application is appropriate and in keeping with the previous approvals.

III. SE OVERVIEW

Commonwealth Place at Westfields will provide greater housing diversity with the introduction of multi-family triplex units into the fabric of Commonwealth Centre and bolstering the 24-hour mixed use center that the County’s Comprehensive Plan envisioned for living, working, shopping, and entertaining. Pursuant to Section 7102 of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance (the “Zoning Ordinance”), the Applicant seeks to provide a signage program that (i) is in scale and harmonious with the mix of uses within Commonwealth Centre, (ii) is so located and sized as to ensure convenience and appropriate wayfinding to the visitors, users and residents of Commonwealth Place at Westfields while not adding to street clutter or otherwise detracting from the planned nature of Commonwealth Centre, (iii) provides greater flexibility in creating a unique and distinctive mixed-use development for living, working, shopping, and entertaining, (iv) allows for appropriate advertising to support the residential sales by allowing greater flexibility than is permitted under the conventional provisions of Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance, and (v) enables the Commonwealth Place at Westfields to have signage that expresses its brand identity while maintaining compatible signage overall.

The Applicant is proposing a permanent sign at the main entrance into Commonwealth Place at Westfields for the 81 multi-family triplex units. Please refer to the enclosed sign package dated October 10, 2023, and revised through July 3, 2024, for details and renderings of the Applicant’s specific proposed signage (the “Sign Package”).

The proposed permanent sign is detailed below:

Monument Signage

In conformance with Section 7101.2.A(1) of the Zoning Ordinance, the Applicant is proposing two (2) project branding signs on the northwest corner of the intersection of Sully Point Lane and Newbrook Drive. Such signs will be erected on top of a brick and stone base (monument) that is consistent with the existing stone walls at the major entrances located in Commonwealth Centre, specifically at the intersections of Westfields Boulevard and Newbrook Drive. This location

provides excellent visibility and wayfinding for residents, visitors, and prospective residents along the Property's Newbrook Drive frontage. Each project identity sign will have a total area of 13.2 square feet and will provide project branding for the Property, and for the property located immediately to its south. The sign shall have a maximum vertical distance from the uppermost extremity of the signs to the average grade level of 5.7' which is comparable in size and design to the monument sign approved in the Land Bay D CSPA – with the only meaningful difference being that the total sign area is broken into two separate signs.

The Applicant has put forward a well-designed and comparable monument sign that meets the requirements of Section 7101.2.A(1) of the Zoning Ordinance, that has proven successful in its ability to significantly impact a community's success.

Temporary Signage

The Applicant is seeking a modification of Section 7100.4.C of the Zoning Ordinance, to permit a total of eleven (8) temporary signs.

Two (2) such temporary signs are non-illuminated freestanding "Coming Soon" signs that will be located along the Property's Newbrook Drive frontage and along Route 28 on Parcel 6D. The sign along Newbrook Drive will have a total sign area of 75 square feet and shall be at a maximum vertical distance from the uppermost extremity of the sign to the average grade level of 8-feet. The sign along Route 28 will have a total sign area of 100 square feet and shall be at a maximum vertical distance from the uppermost extremity of the sign to the average grade level of 15-feet.

The remaining six (6) temporary signs are non-illuminated double-sided freestanding banner signs ("Banner Sign"). Such signage is imperative during the construction, marketing, and sales of the multi-family triplex residential units. Each Banner Sign will be affixed to a pole as depicted on Sheet S-5 of the Sign Package to prevent the banners from moving and will have a total sign area of 12 square feet. Note that this Banner Sign is identical to the ones approved in the Land Bay D CSPA.

It is important to note that the Sign Package does not include any electronic display signs.

IV. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The Property is located within Land Unit J of the Dulles Suburban Center District of the Comprehensive Plan. Land Unit J is planned for a mix of uses that create a pedestrian oriented environment with opportunities to work, live and play.

Signage guidelines with the Dulles Suburban Center section of the Comprehensive Plan emphasize a signage style that is consistent at major roads entering the mixed-use development and at building site entries. The signage should also establish a distinctive theme and identity, and eliminate visual clutter. Building-mounted signs are especially encouraged. The Applicant's proposed signs are harmonious with the surrounding non-residential and residential uses and ensure the continuation of a consistent theme for the Commonwealth Centre development while reducing visual clutter with a single permanent monument sign at the entrance to the Property.

V. WESTFIELDS BUSINESS OWNERS ASSOCIATION (THE “WBOA”)

Pursuant to Proffer 45.A., the Sign Package has been developed in conformance with the WBOA Development Guidelines. In order to confirm conformance, the Applicant engaged with the WBOA to review the Sign Package.

Note that the WBOA’s review of the Sign Package will run concurrently with the County’s review of this application.

VI. SUMMARY

The proposed SE for Commonwealth Place at Westfields seeks to permit a very modest Sign Package that will implement the vision of the Comprehensive Plan for this key 24-hour mixed-use development within this portion of the Dulles Suburban Center Area. The signs will enhance and compliment the architecture of Commonwealth Place at Westfields, as well as the overall architecture and design of Commonwealth Centre.

This SE is requested pursuant to Proffer 45.A. and the provisions of Section 7102 of the Zoning Ordinance, which provides for alternative sign regulations for projects that wish to create a comprehensive sign program. Well-designed and executed permanent signage is critical to the economic performance and success of this multi-family triplex residential community. Quality and visibility will be crucial to operations. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration of this SE by Staff, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors.



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July 3, 2024