TOWN OF UNIVERSITY PARK, MARYLAND
DRAFT STATEMENT OF POSITION ON CAFRITZ
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A COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY VISION

Development of the Cafritz site should move toward a collective community vision for our sector of Prince Georges County—an area which reaches from the Capital Beltway, down Route 1 to Hyattsville, a distance of nearly 5 miles and approximately 2 to 3 miles on either side of the Route 1 corridor. We need to be confident that community concerns are substantively heard and addressed before a rezoning is approved. Collectively, we must articulate a shared vision for our larger community, and understand what development of the Cafritz site will contribute to achieving that vision.

We strongly believe that development must contribute to that collective vision, and should be encouraged only where it contributes to the economic future and quality of life of the community, and where benefits significantly outweigh risks and harm to neighboring properties and the communities.

The burden of proof that R-55 is no longer appropriate for this site and that mixed use brings significantly greater benefits must rest with the Cafritz developers. We are comfortable with continuing the current R-55 zoning of the Cafritz property. The R-55 designation is in keeping with the surrounding neighborhoods, which to the immediate north and west are exclusively residential, and to the south and southeast are predominantly residential.

As a consequence, while many of us would welcome Whole Foods near our community, Whole Foods, *per se*, is not sufficient cause for rezoning the site from R-55 to Mixed Use. The development of the Cafritz site for mixed use also may bring multiple and less-welcome effects.

The purpose of this Position Statement of the Town of University Park is to express the concerns of Mayor and Council as representatives of the residents of the Town, and possible solutions that will contribute to the success not only of the Cafritz site and the commercial entities situated on it, but of the several communities that neighbor it.

This statement addresses six areas of primary concern:

I. SITE ACCESS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Traffic along Route 1 and through University Park is the foremost concern of University Park and its residents; the Cafritz site must be developed in a way that mitigates contributions to traffic problems along Route 1 from Queensbury to Calvert Road.

1. **OBTAINING DIRECT VEHICULAR ACCESS ACROSS THE CSX TRACKS TO RIVER ROAD MUST BE A REQUIRED CONDITION OF REZONING.** The construction of a CSX crossover will contribute to the mitigation of traffic on Baltimore Avenue (Route 1); help ensure public safety by providing

an additional entrance and exit from the property; improve access by foot, bicycle, and vehicle to office workers and staff located in the M Square, NOAA, FDA, USDA, and Physics Institute Office complexes, thereby improving the chances of commercial success on the Cafritz site and increase property values – commercial and residential – on both sides of the CSX track; provide a connection to Metro and the future Purple Line, ensuring the TOD status of the site; and, increase the viability, ridership, and value of a proposed circulator bus (see point 3).

A disproportionate amount of the cut-through traffic which residents of the Town experience originates from, or has as its destination, Baltimore Avenue (Route 1). Without a vehicular crossover meaningful traffic mitigation cannot be ensured, public safety adequately addressed or assured, and the full TOD and commercial potential of the site realized; therefore, ***construction of such a vehicular access crossing <u>must be assured</u> before development of Phase I is allowed***. We recognize that securing such assurance will require carefully constructed triggers be built into the rezoning and permit process to allow the Cafritz property to move forward, while simultaneously protecting the surrounding communities from what we believe would be significant harm if the crossover were to be denied. From experience, we believe that with good will such provisions can be built into the rezoning and detailed site plan documents. We also urge our local, county, state, and federal officials to support and assist the obtaining of such assurance, to the end that the crossover comes to fruition.

2. **REQUIRE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRANSIT DISTRICT MANAGEMENT (TDM) PLAN with area of coverage sufficient to engage the extended community surrounding the intersection of East-West Highway (Route 410) and Baltimore Avenue (Route 1), to be implemented parallel with construction on the Cafritz property:** At a minimum, the TDM should extend from the College Park Metro and MARC stations to Route 1 and down to the Riverdale Park MARC Station and Queensbury Road at the intersection of Queensbury and Route 1, and Westward along Queensbury and East-West Highway to include the residential and commercial areas nearby the Plaza at Prince Georges, University Town Center, and the Metro Station there. The development and implementation of a well designed TDM will ensure that:

    - Traffic is addressed during all phases of the development.
    - A larger portion of the community is engaged.
    - Positions the project to be seen as a Transit Oriented Development site.
    - Assures that a broader set of traffic management tools are used to address collective community needs.

    Further, establishment of a TDM will make it easier to gain support for the CSX Bridge, additional access points for public safety and public transportation, public support to complete the hiker biker trails, and the creation of a local circulator bus system. A well designed TDM will also improve the likelihood that the site is walkable and supports a full pedestrian fabric interconnecting the Cafritz property with the surrounding communities.

3. **PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH EMERGENCY ACCESS** to and from the Cafritz site must be effectively addressed. Emergency vehicles – fire, ambulance, and police -- must have multiple routes available for accessing the site. Reliance on sole access on and off Route 1 is

insufficient, and would unnecessarily place lives at risk in the case of emergencies that impair or block Route 1 access. We agree with Riverdale Park that a Maryland Avenue connection through the Riverdale Park Town Center for emergency and public transit vehicles should be thoroughly studied as such a possible route at a minimum, and incorporated into the conceptual site design and the detailed site design for Phase I.

4. **CIRCULATOR BUS –** The Route 1 corridor communities should design, fund, and implement a system or network of circulator buses connecting communities and transit hubs with commercial centers in Hyattsville, Riverdale Park, and College Park; several possible elements of such a system are already in place. While such a system of circulator buses should be developed and operated by the communities, the Cafritz developer, and other developers in the Route 1 corridor, should contribute to a capital fund necessary to establish and maintain this system. University Park is prepared to make a financial contribution to the design and establishment of such a system through its STEP-UP energy program. It is the Town's expectation that such a system would be called for under a stipulation as part of the rezoning or the detailed site plan.

5. **PEDESTRIAN/BIKE PATHWAYS –** Here also is opportunity to embrace pedestrian-friendly and bike-friendly development; multiple pedestrian and bicycle pathways must be identified, created and maintained both North-South and East-West from the Cafritz site. Though many of these threaded pathways are already available, development of the Cafritz site can both extend and connect these pathways. The emphasis must be on pedestrian safety; it should not be life-endangering to walk or bicycle from Adelphi, Hyattsville, Beltsville, or other communities to the Cafritz site.

6. **EGRESS AND INGRESS AT ROUTE 1 AND VAN BUREN --** Van Buren Street egress and ingress must be light controlled, pedestrian friendly, and prevent direct vehicular crossovers into University Park.

7. **EFFECTIVE ROUTE 1 TRAFFIC SOLUTIONS:** Because the intersection of East-West Highway (Route 410) and Baltimore Avenue (Route 1) is already a failing intersection even in advance of development of the nearby Cafritz site, mitigation of traffic in the Route 1 corridor between Queensbury Road on the South and Guilford Drive on the North must be effective. While we have suggested several tools—access over the CSX tracks, a TDM plan, and a circulator bus system most notably—the outcome must be effective mitigation.

II. STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

1. **THE CAFRITZ SITE AND STORM WATER MANAGEMENT (SWM) OPTIONS:** With a largely uncompacted soil and natural drainage in multiple directions, the Cafritz site has an abundance of storm water management options. Accordingly, the development of the site should minimize the use of the "pond and pipe" engineered solutions apparent in the conceptual proposal , and employ a much broader set of storm water management tools intended to improve water-retention on-site, allowing percolation and slowing run-off. This will make more rainwater available for plant-life on the site, and extend the period over which storm-water flows into the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River. Also, proven, effective alternative methods of handling stormwater exist, such as swales, rain gardens, green roofs, pervious paving, and should be used.

2. **AGREEMENT WITH RIVERDALE PARK'S SWM POSITION:** We agree with Riverdale Park that (1) a storm water management system must be submitted which includes zero impact on the tributary drainage into the Northeast Branch of the Anacostia River; and (2) that this system must be installed for the entire finished site at the beginning of the project, rather than in phases.

3. **SITE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED NEW DEVELOPMENT:** *For purposes of SWM*, this site should be considered new development, rather than redevelopment, and therefore provide storm water management at the 2.6 inch/24 hour standard for a 1-year storm. By using the inherent capacity of the site to absorb and retain at least the first inch of rainfall in the soil, and with enlightened use of green techniques as previously suggested, there should be little reason why Cafritz development should add to flooding in Wells Run or other impacted streams. A lower density of development will make it easier to achieve this standard.

4. **GRADING SHOULD BE SELECTIVE AND LIMITED:** We encourage the Cafritz developers **to avoid grading** the entire Cafritz site as a matter of course, and to protect a 30-40-yard buffer strip along Route 1 as promised in their letter to the communities. In recent presentations, the Cafritz development team has offered to create a walkable, treed, art park along Route 1 that will provide a physical and visual barrier hiding blank walls and parking lots on the property. University Park endorses this concept and would like to see it memorialized in the final order establishing the zoning as well as the detailed site plan (DSP).

5. **REDUCE IMPERMEABLE AREA RATIO AND MAKE MORE USE OF STRUCTURED PARKING**: To reduce the impermeable area ratio of what has been a verdant site, at least 80% of parking spaces should be in garages with green roofs. We are in strong agreement with Riverdale Park in our desire to achieve this goal.

III. ZONING

1. As noted previously, the burden of proof to change the zoning should rest with the Cafritz developers. While most believe that Whole Foods would be a welcome addition to the Route 1 corridor, it is not sufficient cause for rezoning the Cafritz property from R-55 to Mixed Use, in and of itself, particularly in light of the many other commercial, retail, and residential structures that are expected to be built on the site. As a consequence, the type of zoning that is chosen and the rules that are brought with it are critical to the development of the site and its acceptability to University Park. The two zones that have been or were under consideration are Mixed-Use Infill (M-U-I) and Mixed-Use Town Center (M-U-TC). Although the Cafritz site is contained wholly within the boundaries of Riverdale Park, the site shares significantly longer borders with College Park and University Park than with the residential and commercial areas of Riverdale Park.

2. **MUI PREFERRED**: If the property is not to remain as an R-55 zone, Mixed-Use Infill (MU-I) is the more appropriate zoning for the site. M-U-I is a flexible design formula which allows adoption of design standards which closely match M-U-TC standards. M-U-I is sufficiently flexible to handle the complexity of the Cafritz development, and still embrace many of the design standards and guidelines contained in the Mixed-Use-Town Center (M-U-TC). Most importantly for University Park, it is a more open process that allows significantly greater public participation by surrounding property owners and communities, and permits appeal of various technical design decisions up to the District Council.

3. **MIXED-USE TOWN CENTER OPPOSED**: Mixed Use-Town Center is not appropriate for the Cafritz site. Mixed-Use-Town Center zoning is focused on the internal development of the Riverdale Park Town Center and Queensbury road, and says little about transportation or a development of the size and scope of Cafritz. While M-U-TC is designed for established Town Centers such as exists in Riverdale Park, the Cafritz site is not contiguous to the core areas of the Riverdale Park Town Center and barely touches the Riverdale Park M-U-TC Zone. In addition, once granted, outside party objections to detailed site plans are difficult to register and gain a hearing for without going to court. The latter is an expensive and slow process which may result in considerable and unnecessary delay. Attempts to remedy this problem have so far been rebuffed by the County Council, Park and Planning and the County Executive Office, most recently on October 11, 2011. Absent a remedy to this problem, University Park will continue in opposition to the M-U-TC option.

IV. MARKET CONDITIONS:

While we support development where it contributes to the economic future and quality of life of our community, such development must be built upon accurate assessments of current and projected market conditions in the extended community. Without a comprehensive market study built upon current data, there is increased probability that new development will lead to a next generation of vacant housing and empty storefronts, whether on the site of the new development or nearby. In such a scenario, the host communities accrue little of the benefit of new development, but bear most of the costs of failure. Until the proposed market study is complete the Town will not state its opinion or take a position on this matter.

V. PUBLIC SERVICE IMPACTS

1. Many studies conducted throughout the United States suggest that different types of development have significantly differential public cost implications and interact with other development in complex ways. Retail as opposed to commercial centers or malls often generates greater public service demands than tax revenue to support them. Although the Cafritz property development team has estimated the tax revenues that the site would produce, the data have yet to be vetted and a cost analysis of future service demands has yet to be completed. There are clear indications that traffic management and associated mitigation costs cannot be confined to the site and to Riverdale Park.

2. A mechanism must be found to fund any external costs imposed on University Park by the development of the site, particularly those related to traffic management and police services.

3. A significantly more detailed site plan is necessary in order for the impacted municipalities to determine what services are necessary and who will bear what costs.

4. A Cost of Service or Economic Impact Study must be carried out, which recognizes the costs, as well as the revenues, accruing to adjacent communities as well as the surrounding Prince Georges County, as a consequence of development of the Cafritz site.

VI. DENSITY AND DESIGN

1. Whether the site falls under an M-U-I or M-U-TC designation, total density should be capped at a more moderate level than is currently contemplated; the current proposed density remains too high.

2. We find the placement of the residential units back next to the CSX tracks to be inappropriate as it creates a high risk of an undesirable neighborhood developing and to which public safety services lack easy access. Reconsideration must be given to the concept of placing all the residential units in the back next to the railroad tracks as it has a potential for creating a “dead zone.”