

**The Sully at Westfields
Special Exception for Sign Modifications
SE-2024-SU-00019
Statement of Justification**

July 2, 2024

I. INTRODUCTION

JLB CCI Westfields LLC (the “*Applicant*”) seeks approval of a Special Exception for Sign Modifications (the “*SE*”) to allow for a coordinated and comprehensive plan of permanent and temporary signage for the only mid-rise multi-family residential building within the mixed-use development known as Commonwealth Centre. Situated on approximately 4.34 acres of land in the Sully District, Tax Map Parcel 44-1 ((01)) 6C1 (the “*Property*”) is south of Glen Manor Drive, north of Sully Road (Route 28), and west of Westfields Boulevard (Route 662). The Property is zoned Planned Development Commercial District (“*PDC*”) and located within the Water Supply Protection Overlay District. With vertical construction underway on the Property of the 354 unit residential building, branded the Sully at Westfields (the “*Sully at Westfields*”), the Applicant would be remised not to concurrently seek approval of this SE to bring to fruition the critical signage needed to ensure its success.

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 that 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 removal 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 in 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 previously approved 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 two (2) permanent monument signs – signage that is regionally associated with traditional townhome and two-over-two communities. 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 CSPA. Meaning, it was processed and approved as a stand-alone CSPA.

This SE is no different than the Land Bay D CSPA. 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 mid-rise residential multi-family building. Given (i) signage for such a mid-rise multi-family residential building was not contemplated or addressed in the Amended CSPA or the Land Bay D CSPA, (ii) the Property's Entitlements do not permit non-residential development, and (iii) the signage proposed in this SE are all building-mounted, processing this application as a stand-alone application is appropriate and in keeping with the previous approvals.

III. SE OVERVIEW

Sully at Westfields will be a vibrant residential building within Commonwealth Centre. 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 and the Sully at Westfields, (ii) is so located and sized as to ensure convenience and appropriate wayfinding to the visitors, users and occupants of the Sully 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 leasing by allowing greater flexibility than is permitted under the conventional provisions of Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance, and (v) enables the Sully at Westfields to have signage that expresses their brand identity while maintaining compatible signage overall.

Pursuant to Section 7101.2.A.(2)(c) of the Zoning Ordinance, which permits multi-family developments such as Sully at Westfields with 50 square feet of building-mounted signage, the Applicant is proposing a total of eleven (11) building-mounted signs which collectively total 127.26 square feet of permanent building-mounted signage. Given the proposed signage exceeds the by-right permitted signage permitted by Section 7101.2.A.(2)(c), the Applicant is seeking relief pursuant to Section 7102.1.C.(1) to permit the 127.26 square footage of building-mounted signage proposed.

In addition to the building-mounted signage noted above, and detailed below, pursuant to Section 7101.2.A.(3), the Applicant is proposing one (1) retail office sign that is 6 square feet in size for the five-story residential building. Given Section 7101.2.A.(3) only permits a retail office sign that is 4 square feet in size, the Applicant is seeking relief pursuant to Section to Section 7102.1.C.(1) to permit the 6 square foot retail office sign proposed.

Please refer to the enclosed sign package dated July 2, 2024, for details and renderings of the Applicant's specific proposed signage (the "**Sign Package**").

The proposed building-mounted signs are detailed below:

Building Identification Signage (Signs E01.2 and E01.1)

The Applicant is proposing one (1) single-sided building-mounted illuminated building identification sign on the buildings southeastern façade. This location provides excellent visibility and wayfinding for residents, visitors, and prospective renters along the Property's Westfields Boulevard and Sully Road (Route 28) frontage. The proposed location is critical to the building's success in the competitive marketplace. The sign shall be at a maximum vertical distance from the uppermost extremity of the sign to the average grade level of 58'0". This height facilitates easy identification of the building without adding street clutter, which would otherwise detract from the

planned nature of the development. The sign will have a total area of 75.03 square feet and will identify the building as the “The Sully at Westfields.”

In addition to the aforementioned building-mounted identification sign, the Applicant is proposing one (1) single-sided, illuminated building identification sign that will be mounted on the canopy above the building’s main entrance. The sign shall be at a maximum vertical distance from the uppermost extremity of the sign to the average grade level of 14’6”. This height facilitates easy identification of the building by residents, visitors, and prospective renters. The sign will have a total area of 16.92 square feet and will identify the building as the “The Sully at Westfields.”

The Applicant has worked to put forward well-designed building identification signs, and has proven success with buildings similar in scale, and its ability to significantly impact a building’s success. The proposed signage is in scale and harmonious with the building massing and size as shown on Sheet 5 of the Sign Package.

Parking Garage Identification Signs (Signs E02.1 and E02.2)

To provide those traveling by foot or by car with clear identification of resident garage entrances, exits, and loading entrances without providing clutter along the streets to achieve the vision of the planned nature of Commonwealth Centre, the Applicant is proposing four (4) such single-sided, non-illuminated parking garage identification signs. Such signs will be mounted on the facades above the resident entrances to the parking garage along the northern façade of the building and the loading entrances along the building’s eastern and western facades.

Address Number Sign (Sign NIIA)

The Applicant proposes to affix the numeric building address “14400” on the glass panel above the building’s main entrance, utilizing vinyl applied lettering. This will provide visitors traveling not only on foot, but by vehicles along Glen Manor Drive the ability to confirm the building’s address quickly and conveniently. The lettering is simple, clean, and well-designed.

Exterior Room ID Signs (Signs E10G.1, E10G.2, E10G.3, and E10G.4)

The Sully at Westfields provide residents with access to building amenities (such as the pet spa, bike room, mail room, and business center) through exterior doors. In order to appropriately identify these entrances, the Applicant proposes to mount four (4) small glass backer panels on the glass adjacent the exterior door accessing each of the aforementioned amenity spaces. Each such sign is minimal in size and is in scale and harmonious with the massing and size.

The proposed retail office signage is detailed below:

Retail Office Signage (Sign E15B)

The Applicant is requesting one (1) retail office sign. Specifically, a “Windmaster” sign. This double-sided sign is small and moveable by the leasing staff. They are typically only brought outside, near the building’s main entrance, during leasing office hours, and then stored inside the building during the off-hours.

As noted in the Sign Package on Sheet 3, the proposed signage does not include any electronic display signs.

IV. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLAINT

The Property is located within the 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 within 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 identify, 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 by providing building-mounted signage.

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 and has received approval from the WBOA of the Sign Package.

VI. SUMMARY

The proposed SE for the Sully at Westfields seeks to permit a variety of sign types that will implement the vision of the Comprehensive Plan for this key 24-hour mixed-use development within the Dulles Suburban Area. The signs will enhance and compliment the architecture of the Sully 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 project that wish to create a comprehensive sign program. Well designed and executed permanent exterior signage is primary to the economic performance and success of this multi-family building. The resident foot traffic and product positions in a completing operating climate. Quality, visibility and day-night functionality will be crucial to operations. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests favorable consideration of the Sign Plan by Staff, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors.



Samantha Steketee, Senior Land Use Planner
July 2, 2024