

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2024 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CR-096-2024

Draft No.: 1

Committee: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Date: 11/18/2024

Action: FAVORABLE

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable, 7-0-2 (In favor: Chair Ivey, Council Members, Burroughs, Fisher, Harrison, Hawkins, Olson, and Watson) Abstain (Council Members Dernoga and Oriadha)

The Prince George's County Council convened as the Committee of the Whole (COW) on November 12, 2024, to consider CR-096-2024 and voted 10-0 to hold the resolution for additional discussions. On November 18, 2024, the County Council convened again to discuss the resolution.

On Tuesday, October 29, 2024, the County Council introduced CR-083-2024, a resolution for the purpose of designating the National View Site as an Urban Renewal Area in the Town of Forest Heights in Prince George's County and recognizing the authority granted to the municipality by the State of Maryland.

The Planning, Housing and Economic Development Director gave an overview of the Resolution and the Policy Analysis submitted by the Budget and Policy Division on CR-096-2024. The Policy Analysis stated that the adoption of CR-096-2024 will not have a direct fiscal impact on the County. The indirect budgetary impact is favorable because the resolution enables the proposed development to move forward, likely resulting in significant additional tax revenues for the County.

On November 12, 2024, Ms. Dinora Hernandez, with the Office of Law, stated that the resolution is in proper legislative format, legally sufficient, and has no impediments to its adoption.

Ms. Sakinda Skinner, County Council Liaison, with the County Executive's Office, introduced Ms. Angie Rodgers, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Economic Development, Mr. Chis Ahn, Assistant DCAO for Economic Development, and Mr. Sean Dixon, Deputy County Attorney to present a PowerPoint presentation and to discuss any legal questions on CR-096-2024 and CR-097-2024.

Ms. Angie Rodgers gave an overview of the project's economic development. Ms. Rodgers was excited to bring this major project to Councilmanic District Eight. The project would be a seven hundred twenty-million-dollar investment in the Forest Heights area of the County. The project incorporates many of the targeted objectives listed as Prince George's County Economic Development Priorities; the project is mixed-use and includes affordable housing and needed amenities for the area. Mr. Chis Ahn, the subject matter expert on this project, presented a PowerPoint presentation. The project is critical because this is the second development project south of the Blue Line Corridor. He explained that the site is a 20-acre mixed-use sustainable development with over 1500 multifamily dwelling units, of which 150 will be senior mixed-income housing and 60,000 square feet of mixed commercial uses with 98 percent of the parking as structured parking to create a high-density urban environment, as the project is inside the beltway. The project will be developed in six phases from 2029 through 2037.

Council Member Dernoga asked how much of the site is developed. Mr. Ahn explained that it is a blighted area and that the Town of Forest Heights designated the site as an Urban Renewal Area. Mr. Ahn stated that the property is underdeveloped.

Council Member Dernoga expressed his concerns with Urban Renewal Area designations because in College Park, Maryland, the Town of Lakeland was designated an Urban Renewal project, and there have been tremendous historical concerns due to the designation. Council Member Dernoga requested that Office of Law staff define blight. Mr. Sean Dixon, Deputy County Attorney, asked whether Council Member Dernoga sought the definition used by the Town of Forest Heights or a generic definition for the blighted area. Mr. Dixon stated the legal definition of blighted areas. Council Member Dernoga expressed concerns about whether this project constituted true blight. Mr. Dixon explained that the Administration is not asking to exercise the full powers of Urban Renewal powers but is only requesting to designate the area as an Urban Renewal Area.

Ms. Karen Zvakos, Associate County Administrator, explained that it needs to be clarified how blight can be determined from undeveloped property. Mr. Dixon explained that dumping occurs on the site, and blight is not exclusively a building on a site.

On motion of Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Watson, the County Council Committee of the Whole voted 10-0 to hold CR-096-2024.

On November 18, 2024, the Council Committee of the Whole convened again to discuss the Resolution.

Ms. Hernandez, with the Office of Law, again stated that the Resolution is in proper legislative format, legally sufficient, and has no impediments to its adoption.

Ms. Skinner, County Council Liaison, requested a favorable recommendation on CR-096-2024 and discussed the memorandums from Mr. Dixon, Deputy County Attorney, and Ms. Rodgers, Deputy DCAO, providing additional context on the project after meeting with Council Member Burroughs.

Vice Chair Harrison requested information from Ms. Rodgers on the economic benefit to the County for making a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement between the County and the developer. Mr. Ahn gave an overview stating the County's net economic impact of approximately \$110 million.

On motion of Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Watson, the County Council Committee of the Whole voted 7-0-2 favorably on CR-096-2024.