LAW OFFICES

HOFFMAN, COMFORT, OFFUTT, SCOTT & HALSTAD, LLP

24 NORTH COURT STREET WESTMINSTER, MARYLAND 21157

R. NEAL HOFFMAN RICHARD H. OFFUTT, JR. DAMIAN L. HALSTAD DAVID K. BOWERSOX DENNIS M. TWIGG*

RALPH G. HOFFMAN (1910-1994) E. RONALD COMFORT (1947-2016)

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JEFFREY D. SCOTT (OF COUNSEL)

410-848-4444 410-876-2266 FAX: 410-876-9263 E-MAIL: lawyers@hcolaw.com dbowersox@hcolaw.com

*ADMITTED IN MD AND PA

VIA EMAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

jcosentini@sykesville.net

Mr. Joe Cosentini, Town Manager Town of Sykesville 7547 Main Street Sykesville, MD 21784

Dear Mr. Cosentini:

Introduction and Background

Warfield Companies ("Applicant") is requesting an amendment of the Planned Employment Center ("PEC") zoning district.

The PEC district was established as part of Town of Sykesville Ordinance No. 288, adopted on December 8, 2014, for the purpose of creating a mixed-use zone in connection with the Warfield Complex (now known as Warfield at Historic Sykesville) ("Warfield" or the "Property").

The Applicant executed an Agreement of Sale and Purchase on April 17, 2014 to acquire the Property from the Town of Sykesville ("Town"). The Applicant settled on the Property on June 25, 2018. The Town had previously acquired the Property from the State of Maryland ("State") on June 25, 2003, after annexation into the Town. The Town's acquisition of the Property was subject to, among other things, that certain Disposition and Development Agreement by and between the Town and the State executed on or about October 4, 2003 ("Disposition and Development Agreement").

The Town's Planning Commission approved the current preliminary plan ("Preliminary Plan") for Warfield, based on the 2014 zoning text, on December 5, 2016.

Request

The PEC district is outlined in Chapter 180, Article XIII, Sections 180-134 through 180-145, a redlined version of which is included herewith reflecting the Applicant's proposed modifications. Among other things, the Applicant's proposed amendment to the zoning text would allow an increase in residential density while preserving the Applicant's ability to develop non-residential

uses. Such non-residential uses include, without limitation, office, retail, light industrial, institutional, community, hotel, and senior housing of all types.

The Applicant's proposed amendment also seeks to reclassify certain conditional uses to permitted uses and clarify certain ambiguities in the existing zoning text based on the Applicant's experience and research since closing on the Property in 2018.

Rationale: Project Feasibility

The Applicant engaged in an extensive reevaluation process to guide suggested changes to the zoning text. This process included the following:

- Ongoing assessment of data and experience gained from three years of marketing to nonresidential users;
- Ongoing engagement with brokerage community about all types of non-residential uses;
- An updated third-party market study covering a wider range of potential uses and more extensive market analysis;
- An updated third-party fiscal impact study and the addition of an economic impact study to assess community impacts and benefits; and
- Numerous planning, architectural, and engineering studies based on the above to determine the density of various potential uses throughout the project.

The Applicant is requesting an amendment to the PEC zoning district text largely based upon market considerations. In particular, the local market does not support large-scale development of office, retail, and light industrial uses. Employment growth, the most critical driver of demand for commercial space, has been tepid at best in Carroll County over the past couple of decades. Conversely, there is robust demand in the local market for a wide variety of residential uses at multiple price points and of different types, and price growth is strong.

Based on market considerations alone, redevelopment of the Property- particularly rescue and restoration of Warfield historic buildings located in Parcel D- is not feasible under the current zoning. Based on pre-Covid estimates, the cost to rehabilitate the historic buildings at Warfield exceeded the projected finished value of the vacant historic buildings by \$30 million. This gap is due primarily to the high cost of historic rehabilitation relative to new construction. Furthermore,

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market pricing for finished product (particularly non-residential product) outside of vibrant urban areas simply does not support the high cost of rehabilitation.

The foregoing is particularly true for non-residential uses. Unfortunately, the cost/value differential has only widened in the past 18 months due to dramatic increases in construction costs driven by the global pandemic and a significant contraction in commercial and retail demand.

There is also the issue of how the finance such a large-scale project given the previously discussed market, valuation, and cost challenges. Attracting private investment capital to a project with a negative valuation is virtually impossible without government support in the form of grants, tax credits, tax abatement, and similar tools typically used by government both at the state and federal levels.

The Applicant has worked extensively with the State over the past four years to identify and/or conditionally secure over \$38 million in grants and tax credits to fill the \$30 million + gap noted above. On top of this, the State has offered tax-exempt financing that will also help enable the rehabilitation of the historic buildings. The majority of this government support—whether state or federal—is related to housing. Therefore, amending the PEC zoning text to allow more housing at Warfield is the signal most important action the Town can take to enable rehabilitation of the remaining vacant historic structures.

Development of the remaining vacant parcels at Warfield-- Parcels A, B, C, and H-- faces challenges similar to the Parcel D historic buildings. The cost of developing the vacant parcels-particularly retail or commercial-- generally exceeds the projected finished value of the parcels as non-residential. On the other hand, residential land values are high enough to support the cost of site work and project infrastructure, such as the extension of Springfield Avenue to Buttercup Road, relocation of the Buttercup Road water main, demolition of the abandoned water tower on the Property, wetlands remediation (and associated town park improvements), and all of the earthwork associated with the foregoing.

Rationale: Community Benefit

Warfield is unlikely to be redeveloped in the foreseeable future without a text amendment that materially conforms to the Applicant's proposal. Not only would this be detrimental to the Applicant-- it would be to the detriment of the Town and its residents-- resulting in loss of numerous community benefits including:

• Preservation of valuable historical resource;

- Pilot project: First step in the redevelopment of the Springfield Hospital Center campus, a large portion of which is in Sykesville's future growth area;
- Local economic development including supporting local merchants and contributing to vibrant Main Street;
- Significant expansion of the Town's and county's tax bases; and
- Attracting millions in state investment in Sykesville (not just Warfield).

The most recent fiscal and economic impact studies commissioned by the Applicant provide a detailed analysis of the last three items, above.

Rationale: Consistent with Town's Comprehensive Plan

The Applicant believes that the proposed zoning text amendment is consistent with the Town's comprehensive plan (*Town of Sykesville Comprehensive Plan: Vision 2030*). In particular, pp. 24-25 of the plan (pp. 29-30 in the PDF version on the Town's website) generally affirms many of the observations outlined in this letter and presented by the Applicant to the Town in other forums. These two pages are attached for ease of reference.

Rationale: Consistent with Disposition and Development Agreement

Although the Disposition and Development Agreement acknowledges the Town's original desire to develop the Property "principally as an employment center/office park," it states a contingency that "in the event that the Carroll County Public Water Supply becomes sufficient to sustain high-density residential development, the Town shall investigate the fixability of incorporating residential development into its plans for [the Property]... [and] if residential development is determined feasible, the Town shall employ reasonable efforts to incorporate residential options into [the Property]. The State will consider the dedication of additional programmatic resources to [the Property] upon demonstration by the Town of the intent to incorporate and implement Smart Growth Ideals."

The Disposition and Development Agreement further states: "The Town shall use reasonable efforts to design and develop [the Property] in accordance with Smart Growth Neighborhood Protocols" which are outlined in <u>Exhibit B</u> of the Disposition and Development Agreement. Some selections from this exhibit that support the Applicant's proposed zoning text amendment and a shift towards residential development in a mixed-use context are as follows:

- Intent: "The purpose of the smart neighborhood overlay is to encourage development that provides for a diverse mix and efficient arrangement of land uses and housing types."
- Permitted Uses: "Residential uses that contribute to housing type diversity, including condominiums, duplexes, multifamily, retirement, and townhouses."
- General Development Standards:
 - o "... Smart neighborhood development shall seek to pride a mix of housing types... and should integrate different income levels into the design of, and distributed throughout the community."
 - o "The density should be maximized to reduce the costs of providing service to and encourage the growth of a neighborhood as a community."
 - o "The smart neighborhood shall contribute to unmet commercial, housing, civic, and open space needs in nearby neighborhoods."
 - o "The smart neighborhood development shall include some mix of commercial, office/employment, civic, recreational, and residential uses."

Conclusion

Market evolution and other factors, foreseen and unforeseen, have demonstrated that the viability of the Warfield project requires greater flexibility and adaptation of the zoning structure in order for Warfield to achieve the positive impact which the Town, State of Maryland and the developers have been working in concert to achieve for the past several years. This is particularly true with the preservation of the valuable historical resource and architecture and features, achieving a profitable and reliable tax base and an orderly growth of the community based on market data and other factors mentioned herein.

Some of these requested amendments were specifically contemplated by the Disposition and Development Agreement nearly 20 years ago and others were specifically indicated in the most recent version of the Town's comprehensive plan. Favorable consideration of the requested amendments to the PEC District provisions of the Zoning Ordinance will be implementation of

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the Comprehensive Plan through zoning as required by the Land Use Article of the State Code and allow the goals of the Disposition and Development Agreement to be better achieved.

Very truly yours,

HOFFMAN, COMFORT, OFFUTT, SCOTT & HALSTAD, LLP

David K. Bowersox

DKB/kat Enclosures

cc: Mr. Steven D. McCleaf (via email and first class mail)

Mr. Sean Davis (via email and first class mail) Mr. Roger Conley (via email and first class mail)

Proposed new language highlighted in green.

Stricken language in red strike through.

§ 180-134. Purpose.

The purpose of the PEC - Planned Employment Center District is to provide for logical locations where high-quality mixed use developments can occur in harmony with surrounding land uses (including site layouts and architecture that is aesthetically pleasing and consistent with applicable guidelines) and in support of Sykesville's goals for growing the employment base, providing housing for existing and future residents, and offering retail services that complement the existing businesses within the Town. The following objectives will help fulfill this purpose:

- A. To encourage orderly, staged development of comprehensively designed mixed-use centers.
- B. To create a mixture of office, retail, recreational, hotel, institutional, light industrial non-residential and residential uses within a single structure or within multiple structures where all related structures, parking, and open spaces are designed to function as a cohesive and integrated site, while protecting the residential character of surrounding neighborhoods.
- C. To provide for an enriched and enhanced natural environment by the preservation of trees and the incorporation of stormwater management techniques which maintain the hydrologic regime of the site.
- D. To assure compatibility of the proposed land uses with the internal and surrounding uses by incorporating innovative standards of land planning and site design.
- E. To encourage harmonious and coordinated development of sites, considering the existing natural features, bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular circulation and compatibility with surrounding uses.
- F. To encourage development that is of excellent design and architecture with a mix of uses that will create a synergy of uses, efficiency of design, and contribute to a reduction of vehicle miles traveled.

§ 180-135. Applicability.

PEC - Planned Employment Centers are limited to one or more contiguous parcels properties that whose aggregate acreage is are in excess of 20 acres, a portion of which is located and are within 1,320 feet from Maryland Route 32. Any portion of a proposed development application must be within 1,320 feet from Route 32; the entire development parcel does not have to meet this requirement. The following regulations and applicable regulations contained in other articles shall apply in the PEC - Planned Employment Center District.

§ 180-136. Principal permitted uses.

The principal permitted uses in this district shall be as follows:

- A. Nonresidential uses including:
 - (1) Local retail business or service uses, including:
 - (a) Alcoholic package good stores. [Amended 7-11-2016 by Ord. No. 296]
 - (b) Antique shops.
 - (c) Appliance sales and service facilities.
 - (d) Arcades.
 - (e) Art galleries.
 - (f) Art and craft shops.
 - (g) Artisans and craft work.
 - (h) Auditoriums, theatres and performing arts facilities.
 - (i) Automobile gasoline and service facilities; with, or without, accessory car washes.
 - (j) Automobile parts and supply stores.
 - (k) Bakery or donut shops.
 - (I) Banks.
 - (m) Barbershops.
 - (n) Bicycle, motor scooter, moped sales and service.
 - (o) Billiard and pool halls.
 - (p) Bookstores, except adult bookstores.
 - (q) Cafeterias and food halls.
 - (r) Candy stores.
 - (s) Cigar stores.
 - (t) Clock shops for sale or repair.
 - (u) Clothing stores.
 - (v) Communication antennae and equipment.
 - (w) Computer, TV, phone, and electronic equipment sales and service.
 - (x) Consignment shops, except pawn shops.

- **(y)** Construction or sales trailers, temporary, in an approved development actively under construction. (\mathbf{z}) Convenience stores, gift shops, and newsstands. (aa) Delicatessens and snack bars. (bb) Department stores. Dog grooming and dog day-care facilities, without outside runs or pens. (cc)(dd) Dry cleaning retail outlets. (ee) Entertainment complexes and theatres, including multi-screen complexes but excluding adult movies/videos. (ff) Flooring stores. (gg)Florist shops. (hh) Furniture stores. (ii) Grocery stores. (ii) Hair and nail salons.
 - (kk) Hardware stores.(ll) Health clubs, spas, and gymnasiums.
 - (mm) Hobby shops.
 - (nn) Home centers and building supply stores.
 - (oo) Ice cream shops.
 - (pp) Interior decorating establishments.
 - (qq) Jewelry stores.
 - (rr) Linens, bath, and curtains stores.
 - (ss) Locksmiths.
 - (tt) Luggage or leather goods stores.
 - (uu) Mailing and shipping services.
 - (vv) Meat, seafood, and poultry markets.
 - (ww) Nightclubs and comedy clubs.
 - (xx) Office supply stores and business service, establishments including signage and copying.

- (yy) Opticians or optometrical establishments.
- (zz) Parks, private.
- (aaa) Pet shops.
- (bbb) Pharmacies.
- (ccc) Photographic stores and studios.
- (ddd) Picture framing establishments.
- (eee) Produce markets.
- (fff) Public and commercial recreational facilities, including tennis, racquet and handball barns or courts, indoor soccer, bowling alleys, skating rinks and swimming pools.
- (ggg) Pubs, taverns, breweries, distilleries, and wine bars.
- (hhh) (Reserved)
- (iii) Rental establishments including on-site self storage.
- (iii) Restaurants (without liquor licenses or with liquor licenses, providing that the average monthly receipts from the sale of food constitute at least 41% of the average monthly receipts from the combined sale of food and alcoholic beverages as measured over a period of one year immediately preceding the date of an application for license issuance, renewal, upgrade, transfer or other modification). [Amended 7-11-2016 by Ord. No. 296]
- (kkk) Sporting goods stores.
- (III) Stationery stores.
- (jjj) Swimming pools (private) and recreational facilities (private) associated with a residential development, if located at least 50 feet from each lot line and dwelling unit.
- (mmm)Tanning salons.
- (nnn) Tattoo parlors and body piercing salons.
- (ooo) Telecommuting centers.
- (ppp) Toy shops.
- (qqq) Travel agencies.
- (rrr) Upholstering shops, including sail making shops.
- (sss) Video sales and rental establishments, excluding adult video sales and rental.

- (ttt) Wallpaper and paint stores.
- (2) Office, research, institutional, and light industrial uses including:
 - (a) Advertising agencies.
 - (b) Adult day care centers.
 - (c) Retirement homes and senior housing facilities including independent living, assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing facilities, whether stand-alone or within a continuing care retirement community.
 - (d) Auditoriums, theatres, and performing arts facilities.
 - (e) Banquet halls.
 - (f) Business, professional, and medical offices and clinics.
 - (g) Catering establishments.
 - (h) Child-care centers.
 - (i) Civic facilities, community centers, libraries, museums.
 - (j) Community meeting halls.
 - (k) Computer and data processing facilities.
 - Engineering and scientific research or development facilities.
 - (m) Government offices.
 - (n) Hospice facilities.
 - (o) Hospitals and health care facilities.
 - (p) Hotels and motels.
 - (q) Light manufacture or assembly space facilities, i.e. makerspace, catering or auxiliary kitchens, etc.
 - (r) Nursing homes and congregate care facilities.
 - (s) Religious facilities.
 - (t) Schools, public charter, and schools, private: academic, arts, business, technical, or trade, public or private colleges and universities.
 - (u) Television stations, radio broadcasting stations, and recording studios.
 - (v) Veterinary clinics, if over-night stays are limited to those necessary for medical treatment, without outside runs or pens.
- (B) Residential uses including:

- (1) Single-family, detached and attached.
- (2) Two-family.
- (3) Multifamily residential.
- (C) Any other retail business, service establishment, office, research, institutional, light industrial, and residential use which is determined by the Board to be the same general character as the above permitted uses. (Note: This determination is a ministerial act and is made by the Board meeting in public session, but does not require a public hearing or notice thereof.)

§ 180-137. Conditional uses.

The conditional uses requiring Board authorization in this district shall include:

- A. Nonresidential uses including:
 - (1) Local retail business or service uses, including:
 - (a) Appliance sales and service facilities.
 - (b) Automobile gasoline and service stations.
 - (c) Carwashes accessory to automobile gasoline stations.
 - (d)(a) Public and commercial recreational facilities, including miniature golf; driving ranges; tennis, racquet, and handball barns or courts; artificial ski slopes; indoor soccer; bowling alleys; BMX bike, skateboard or roller blade parks; and go-carting.;skating rinks, and swimming pools.
 - (e)(b) Communication towers, except that freestanding telecommunication towers are prohibited.
 - (f)(c) Dog grooming and dog day-care facilities, without outside runs or pens.
 - (g) Entertainment complexes and theatres, including multi-screen complexes but excluding adult movies/videos.
 - (h) Health clubs, spas, and gymnasiums.
 - (i) Home centers and building supply stores.
 - (i) Meat, seafood, and poultry markets.
 - (k) Nightclubs and comedy clubs.
 - (1) Pet shops.
 - (m) Produce markets.
 - (n) Establishments licensed to keep for sale and to sell beer and light wines at retail for consumption on the premises or elsewhere (including pubs, taverns, microbreweries, and wine bars), and where at least 50% of the business is comprised of selling alcohol. [Added 7-11-2016 by Ord. No. 296]
 - (2) Office, research, institutional, and light industrial uses including:
 - (a) Adult day care centers.
 - (b) Assisted living facilities.
 - (c) Auditoriums.

- (d) Banquet halls.
- (e) Catering establishments.
- (f) Child care centers.
- (g) Civic facilities, community centers, libraries, museums.
- (h) Community meeting halls.
- (i)(a) Country clubs, private clubs, service, nonprofit, and charitable or philanthropic organizations, social clubs, and fraternal organizations.
- (i)(b) Funeral establishments.
- (k)(c) Golf courses.
- (1) Hospice facilities.
- (m) Hospitals.
- (n) Hotels and motels.
- (o) Nursing homes and congregate care facilities.
- (p) Religious facilities.
- (q) Schools, public charter, and schools, private: academic, arts, business, technical, or trade, public or private colleges and universities.
- (r)(d) Staging areas for county capital projects.
- (s) Veterinary clinics, if over night stays are limited to those necessary for medical treatment, without outside runs or pens.
- B. Any other retail business, service establishment, office, research, institutional, and light industrial use which is determined by the Board to be the same general character as the above conditional uses. Any conditional use proposed must be reviewed by the Planning Commission before submission to the Board. The Planning Commission will make a recommendation to the Board. In deciding such matters, the Board shall give consideration, among other things, to the following:
 - (1) The number of people residing or working in the immediate area concerned.
 - (2) The orderly growth of Sykesville.
 - (3) Traffic conditions and facilities.
 - (4) The effect of such use upon the peaceful enjoyment of people in their homes.
 - (5) The conservation of property values.

- (6) The effect of odors, dust, gas, smoke, fumes, vibrations, glare and noise upon the use of surrounding properties.
- (7) The most appropriate use of land and structure.
- (8) Decisions of the courts.
- (9) The purpose of these regulations as set forth herein.
- (10) Type and kind of structures in the vicinity where public gatherings may be held, such as schools, churches, and the like.

§ 180-138. Accessory uses.

The accessory uses allowed in this district shall be those uses and structures customarily accessory and incidental to any permitted principal use or authorized conditional use. Accessory uses shall be screened from public view by walls, fencing, landscaping, or a combination of the three.

§ 180-139. Required percentage of land uses.

A. The following percentages of land uses shall be provided in a PEC- Planned Employment Center development proposal:

Office/research/institutional/hotel/light industrial: 20% to 55%

Retail/services: 10% to 20%

Non-residential: No less than 5%.

Residential: No more than

75%. 10% to 35%

Open space: no less than 25%

- B. Building square footages shall be used to determine the land use percentages within mixed-use buildings. For example, if a mixed-use building is on a two-acre parcel within the development and 25% of the building is devoted to nonresidential uses and 75% is devoted to residential uses, then 25% of the parcel area (1/2 acre) shall be considered nonresidential and 75% (one and 1/2 acre) shall be considered residential.
 - (1) For the purposes of this calculation, the percentage for each land use shall be based on the total (or gross) development parcel size.
 - (2) Any land that was previously part of the original development parcel that was subdivided and dedicated to the Town of Sykesville can be included in the total development parcel size for determining both percentage of land use and open space requirements (i.e., Warfield Park Parcel, and internal public roads).
- C. Recreational space shall be provided within, or adjacent to, any proposed residential development. Twenty percent of the required open space shall be devoted to recreational space. Recreational space is defined as good buildable land with no wetlands, floodplains, forest conservation, slopes in excess of 5% grade (once graded), or any other environmental or physical encumbrances. Physical improvements within the required recreational space (such as a community center, play equipment, etc.) can reduce the total required area below 20% at the Commission's discretion.

§ 180-140. Densities and floor area ratios.

A. The maximum nonresidential floor area ratio shall be 0.15 based on the total development parcel. Floor area ratio shall be measured in square footage. The maximum residential density shall be 6.5 two homes per acre based on the total

development parcel. Residential density shall be measured in units per acre. For mixed-use buildings (i.e., residential over retail), the nonresidential shall be considered square feet and deducted from the total permissible nonresidential square feet and the residential shall be dwelling units and deducted from the total permissible residential density.

B. No density bonuses from any other section of the Sykesville Zoning Code shall be permitted in the PEC - Planned Employment Center.

§ 180-141. Maximum height.

The maximum building height shall be six stories.

§ 180-142. Bulk regulations (lot area, lot width, and yard requirements).

The bulk regulations for a PEC - Planned Employment Center shall follow traditional neighborhood design principles where buildings are close to streets and necessary services such as parking areas, trash containers, alleys, loading areas, etc., are hidden, in as much as possible, from public view. During the concept plan phase of the development approval process, the applicant shall provide the Commission with a list of building setback requirements from public streets, other structures within the development, and the property boundaries. Once approved by the Commission, these bulk requirements shall be included in the pattern book and govern development of the PEC - Planned Employment Center.

§ 180-143. Pattern book.

- As part of the preliminary plan phase of the development approval process, the applicant shall provide the Commission with a pattern book that will address site planning, architectural, landscape architectural, and signage requirements for the proposed development. Once approved by the Commission, the pattern book shall govern development of the PEC Planned Employment Center. If guidelines exist for the proposed development, such as the "Warfield Commercial Center: Design Guidelines and Standards for Signs and Energy Efficiency," then the applicant will follow them, or propose changes to account for changes in the land use, technology, or design approach. The pattern book shall be prepared by a licensed professional landscape architect, architect, or engineer.
- B. The pattern book shall include, at a minimum, the following sections:
 - (1) Introduction.
 - (a) Description of the overall development.
 - (b) Market analysis for the proposed uses.
 - (b)Relationship between the proposed development and the existing Town.
 - (2) Site planning principles.
 - (a) Relationship of uses within the development.
 - (b) Focal points of the development and how they have been maximized.

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(c) Vehicular and pedestrian connectivity within the development and to the Town.

- (d) Proposed recreational areas within and adjacent to residential areas. Including proposed improvements to recreational areas to serve the intended residential population.
- (e) Building and parking setbacks.
- (f) Parking ratios per use shall be determined by the Commission and shall take into consideration plans for shared parking facilities, etc. in accordance with § 180-88.
- (g) Proposed service and loading spaces.
- (3) Architectural design.
 - (a) Architectural style and overall design principles.
 - (b) Graphic examples of selected style.
 - (c) Design details and materials.
- (4) Landscape architectural design.
 - (a) Public spaces and art within the development.
 - (b) Hardscape and softscape design details and materials.
 - (c) Streetscape design.
 - (d) Site furnishing details and products.
 - (e) Landscape screening (perimeter buffers, parking lots, service and loading areas).
 - (f) Lighting details and materials.
- (5) Signage plan.
 - (a) A signage plan for the Planned Employment Center shall be included in the pattern book. The signage plan shall outline:
 - [1] Size, type, and location of all signs at the entrance to the development.
 - [2] Size and type of the stationary direction sign.
 - [3] Size and type of all flat wall signs.
 - [4] Size and type of service entrance signs.
 - (b) Exterior signage in the Planned Employment Center shall be for identification only and may not be treated as an advertising device. Signage text is limited to company name and/or logo.

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- (c) Sign locations shall be permitted as follows:
- [1] For each single-tenant building, one freestanding sign at a point near the project entrance and one building-mounted sign.
- [2] For each multi-tenant building, one freestanding sign with only the building name at a point near the project entrance and a building-mounted tenant identification system for each tenant.
 - (d) Sign types shall be permitted as follows:
- [1] Freestanding signs.
 - [a] Maximum size shall not exceed 24 square feet on a two-sided sign.
 - [b] Maximum height shall not exceed six feet above grade except for the sign identifying the Planned Employment Center.
 - [c] The sign shall be constructed of durable materials consistent with and/or complementary to the materials used in buildings within the Planned Employment Center.
 - [d] The sign shall be mounted on a sturdy base.
 - [e] Illumination by unobtrusive ground lighting is permissible.
- [2] Building-mounted signs.
 - [a] Sign location on the building shall be compatible with the architectural design of the building.
 - [b] No signs may extend above the roof or parapet line of the building.
 - [c] Illumination may be internal through a translucent letter face or opaque letters project slightly off the wall and back-lit from a source concealed within the letter.
 - (e) In multi-tenant buildings, the developer or owner is responsible for submitting a tenant identification system for approval.
- [1] The system shall include a standardized design format to ensure matching of size, materials, color, finish, and typeface.
- [2] The system shall be of a scale to identify individual tenants from parking areas rather than to provide major tenant visibility from surrounding roads.
- [3] Tenant signage shall be building-mounted. The placement shall relate architecturally to door and window openings or other elements of the building.

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- [4] Each tenant shall be assigned a designated sign panel.
- (f) Sign color shall be limited to one color for the lettering and one color for the background. The background color shall be darker than the message and graphics. Where an additional color is desired because it is part of the owner's or tenant's logo, the Commission may modify this requirement.
- (g) Each lot is limited to one temporary sign, which may be double-sided and shall be removed within one year.
 - [1] Maximum sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet.
 - [2] Signs shall be mounted on two four-inch-by-four-inch wood posts with top of sign a maximum of eight feet.
 - [3] Actual mounting height permitted shall be determined by sign proportions and location.
- (h) The following are prohibited:
 - [1] Flashing or moving signs.
 - [2] Exposed neon or other exposed light source signs.
 - [3] Applied wood letters.
- (i) The guidelines established above shall supersede § 180-89. In addition, the Planning Commission can modify these guidelines based on a superior signage plan and program.
- (6) Management and maintenance program.
 - (a) For privately owned property.
 - (b) For common areas.
- (7) Phasing of the development.
 - (a) The anticipated time to complete the entire development.
 - (b) When various uses of the development are anticipated to be developed. Consider balancing the development of various uses to maximize the fiscal benefit to the development and Town.
- C. The pattern book shall be evaluated based on the Purpose and Objectives of the PEC Planned Employment Center District as outlined in § 180-134.

§ 180-144. Approval process.

- A. A PEC Planned Employment Center shall follow a three-step approval process, including:
 - (1) Concept plan;

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- (2) Preliminary plan; and
- (3) Final plan/subdivision.
- B. Any amendment of the plan must go through the same three-step process. If, however, the Town's Zoning Administrator believes the amendment is not substantive, then the concept and preliminary approval steps can be combined into one preliminary plan approval.
- C. An applicant shall submit all concept, preliminary and final plans to the Planning Commission for consideration. The purpose is to provide the Commission with sufficient information to determine the practicality and suitability of the proposed development. All plans shall be prepared by a licensed architect, registered civil engineer, professional landscape architect or other qualified land planner. All plans shall be to scale and contain the appropriate information for the submission (i.e., concept plans are more general than preliminary or final plans).

D. Hearing.

- (1) The Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing when considering the preliminary plan (including the pattern book). The following notice shall be given:
 - (a) At least 15 days' notice of the time and place of such hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the Town.
 - (b) Property upon which a Planned Employment Center development is proposed shall be posted conspicuously by a notice at least 22 inches by 28 inches in size, at least 15 days before the date of the hearing.
 - (c) Notice of the hearing shall be sent by first-class mail to the person making application to the Commission no less than 15 days prior to the first scheduled hearing.
 - (d) At least 15 days prior to the first scheduled hearing, notice of the hearing shall be sent by first-class mail to those persons identified by the applicant as persons owning property contiguous to the property which is the subject of the proceeding. Notice shall be sufficient if given to the person shown as the owner on the tax rolls and sent to the address where tax bills are sent.
- (2) The Commission may approve or disapprove the Preliminary Plan (including the Pattern Book) after a public hearing.
- E. Should the Planning Commission determine additional assistance to review an application is required, the Town may hire licensed professionals (such as a landscape architect, architect, and/or engineer) to assist in the review of the application. The cost of any outside professionals shall be paid for by the applicant. The Town shall make every effort to minimize all costs associated with any outside professional assistance.

§ 180-145

§ 180-145. Other applicable regulations.

The regulations provided herein are not meant to supersede other applicable Town, county, or state regulations such as historic district and Maryland Historic Trust requirements, stormwater management, parking regulation, forest conservation act requirements, and/or sediment and erosion control provisions. These, and other regulations, shall remain in full effect and govern the design.

Support mixed-use redevelopment of the Warfield Complex.

Given the existing approved Master Plan for the tract of property and ongoing market feasibility studies for the project, specific recommendations for revising the Master Plan for Warfield are not included in this Comprehensive Plan. Generally, however, this Plan recognizes that the Town should consider flexibility on future land development submissions to ultimately achieve a mixed-use development which can be defined more specifically during the Town's potential zoning rewrite. Timing is important; the vacant historic buildings will continue to deteriorate and may render them unsavable in the future. While the community and state desire preservation at a broad brush stroke, realistic cost benefit analyses and case studies from other former state hospital campuses across the Mid-Atlantic suggest the importance of embracing financially viable redevelopment strategies.

A mixed-use zoning designation for Warfield will enable developers to respond to market conditions and work with the Town on amending the existing Master Plan that was agreed to when the sale of the property happened. While some progress was achieved during the Town's ownership, there remains challenging regional market conditions and costly historic building restoration work. This Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town work collaboratively with the developers of Warfield to engage in an urban design workshop to develop a new vision for the mixed-use development. The outcomes of which may be used to inform future zoning.

The need for mixed-use development is supported by a Town commissioned economic and fiscal impact study of the Warfield development. The 2020 Sage Policy Group study shows demand for market-rate housing, driven by the Millennial generation that is shifting from apartments to owner-occupied housing as they begin to form families. In terms of retail, the study notes the proposed 35,000 square feet of retail space is relatively small but would require residential development to be built-out first to provide local demand. The study finds the proposed office space challenging, estimating complete absorption may require two decades or longer, and would require aggressive marketing and incentives. The Sage study also notes the overall market downturn for office space, at least in the short-term, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



FUTURE ZONING RECOMMENDATION

A mixed-use zoning designation for Warfield would enable the current or future developers to respond to market conditions and not be locked into the existing Master Plan (shown above) that has made little progress since the property was sold in 2018 due to regional market conditions and the cost of historic building restoration.

If rezoning does occur, the Town's approval processes would still be required, including approvals through the Historic District Commission, Planning Commission, and Town Council. Any new development, regardless of use, will need to conform to the overall vision and architectural integrity of the Warfield complex.



EMBRACING MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AT WARFIELD

Warfield has seven parcels, Parcels A-F and H, in the northwest portion of the Town. The approved Master Plan outlines the following uses:

PARCEL A-B

• 35,000 SF of retail with 183 parking spaces

 125 room extended stay hotel with 117 parking spaces

PARCEL C.D&H

• **103,000** SF of new office

- 183,000 SF of renovated office space (historic buildings)
- 955 parking spaces

PARCEL E-F

• **145** townhomes with parking

Townhome development of Parcels E-F has been successful in recent years. However, challenges associated with retail development of Parcels A-B and office development for Parcels C, D, and H are considered difficult in terms of the Carroll County sub-market to the larger Baltimore market and the substantial cost associated with building restoration, driven by the cost of historic preservation and asbestos and lead paint remediation commonly found with buildings dating back to the early twentieth century. Market conditions alone demonstrate the challenge of the current Master Plan. The plan calls for the construction and renovation of 286,000 square feet of office space, which would increase Carroll County's office inventory by 10 percent on a single tract of land surrounded predominantly by agricultural and residential uses.

Carroll County is a mid-size market with 2.9 million square feet today and generally considered stagnate; net absorption has posted a negligible average annual change over the past five years and rents per square foot have also remained generally unchanged. Based on CoStar 2021 data, Carroll County's net absorption of office space over the most recent 10-year period (2010-2019) averaged 7,475 square feet per year. At that pace, assuming Warfield would absorb all of Carroll County's demand, it would take 38 years to absorb the amount of office space proposed. On the retail side, Eldersburg is the major commercial center for retail in southern Carroll County. Located just 3.5 miles north of Sykesville, commercial big box retail is already established in Eldersburg and will continue to serve as the retail hub for the area.

Given the fluid dynamics in the real estate market, future zoning policies for Warfield should consider a form-based mixed-use approach that is more focused on the development's urban form and function than stipulating specific uses. This approach accommodates changes in the real estate markets but reinforces the need for new development to uphold and strengthen Sykesville's historic character and small-town charm.