

CORPUS CHRISTI PARISH

Special Exception Application

SPEX 2009-0008; SPEX 2009-0012; SPEX 2009-0013

~Statement of Justification~

February 27, 2009

Revised March 5, 2009

Revised November 18, 2009

Introduction

The Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, (the “Applicant”) requests approval of a Special Exception (the “Application”) to allow religious assembly (1,200 seat church, parish center, rectory and accessory uses); education (school for more than 15 pupils), and group living (convent) uses on approximately 17.9 acres (the “Property”) in the Upper Broad Run subarea of the Transition Policy Area.

The Property is zoned TR1-UBF (Transitional Residential) and is a portion of an 83 acre parcel (Tax Map/Parcel # 100/57 and MCPI # 247-49-1020) currently owned by Stone Ridge Community Development II, LLC. The Property is located in the Dulles South area of Loudoun County (the “County”) south of Route 50, north and east of future Marrwood Drive and west of land currently zoned TR1-UBF and future Relocated Route 659. Land uses surrounding the Property include the recently approved Boyd School (“Arcola School” – SPEX 2008-0021) to the north, and existing and planned residential uses/communities such as Stone Ridge, Marrwood Subdivision and Westport Subdivision on the east, south and west, respectively. The Property is located in the Dulles Election District.

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Background

Since the early 1990's, the Dulles South area of Loudoun County has experienced tremendous growth. The area served by the Corpus Christi Parish includes over fifteen (15) major planned residential communities that are under development or approved but undeveloped. As a result, the Corpus Christi Parish has experienced growth mirroring that of the Dulles South area, with current membership exceeding nine hundred (900) families. Although the majority of the Corpus Christi parishioners live in Loudoun County, the Corpus Christi Parish currently worships and conducts other parish activities in a flex industrial building located in Lafayette Business Park in Fairfax County. The Catholic Diocese of Arlington ("CDA") has been actively seeking land in the Dulles South area to locate a full-service parish that will satisfy the existing and future needs of the Corpus Christi Parish. The subject site represents an ideal location for development of the parish.

Applicant's Proposal

As indicated on the enclosed *Corpus Christi Parish Special Exception Application Plat* (the "Plat"), prepared by Bowman Consulting, dated February 27, 2009, revised through October 22, 2009, and attached as Exhibit A, the proposed special exception uses will be developed as a unified parish campus. The design of the campus orients the proposed uses on traditional symbolic forms to create a distinctive setting wherein community-centered spiritual, social, and educational enrichment will occur. The integrated development of the proposed uses on a centrally located campus will promote vibrant, sustainable growth for Corpus Christi Parish, and establish it as a comprehensive civic resource for the surrounding neighborhoods, and the Dulles South area as a whole.

Over the past year, the Applicant has worked with members of the Corpus Christi Parish, the Parish priest, architect, and land planner on the layout and design of the proposed Parish campus. The site of the Proposed Parish campus is located on the eastern edge of the Transition Policy Area, just south of the old Arcola Elementary School (now the Boyd School), an existing institutional use.

While each proposed building on the SPEX plat is depicted as a generic rectangular or square bounding diagram ("envelope"), the intent for each structure is a much richer and varied

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design form that will likely include curved shapes and/or overlapping squares or rectangles within the envelope area. Such forms will be designed in a manner that will ultimately relate each of the primary structures – Parish Center (Interim Church), Parish Church and Parish School – to each other and achieve an integrated architectural identity for the Parish Campus. It is the intent of the design to provide variety and interest in the composition of building shapes rather than provide a series of simple squares or rectangles. Indeed, the Parish Center and the Parish School structures would not follow symmetrical plans, but the Parish Church might appropriately be a more formal plan shape. As a whole, the design of the campus – buildings, parking, open and natural spaces - will be complementary to the surrounding community, facilitating the physical and visual transition intended by adopted policy.

The three primary structures proposed on the site each address a specific programmatic element of the overall parish campus, which thus influence their respective designs and physical relationship to each other and the surrounding community. A portion of the Parish Center building will likely be accommodated in a low structure consisting of one story with administrative, conference and counseling rooms, and spaces for various parish ministries. Another part of the Parish Center will contain a gathering space for social and liturgical activities. While this space may also be one story, it will likely have a higher overall massing than the administrative component, but will be designed to work in concert with the Parish Center’s overall form and not dominate the structure. The height of the Parish Center will also comply with all applicable zoning regulations.

The Parish Church will ultimately serve as the physical centerpiece of the campus, and will thus be a taller structure than either the Parish Center or Parish School. In general, the Parish Church may follow a more formal shape while the Parish Center and School will be less formal and more varied in form. It is envisioned that the Parish Church may have a bell tower or steeple element, which would provide a vertical counterpoint to the larger complex. Lastly, roof forms provide one of the most recognizable and memorable images of architecture. As such, it is the intent to keep the respective roof forms of the Parish Center and Parish School to a lower pitch, and the roof of the Parish Church will likely consist of a taller or steeper form.

A key Diocese of Arlington design guideline that will shape the appearance of the Corpus Christi campus is that all parish structures are to be developed with permanent materials. As

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such, masonry – brick, stone or a combination of both – will be the primary material used in the construction of Corpus Christi Parish. Glazed areas are an important part of any parish building and will be used to the advantage of occupants, both allowing as much natural light into the building as well as providing opportunities for vistas of the campus and countryside. The use of clerestory windows is also intended for all three primary structures. The sloped roofs would be appropriately standing seam metal or similar material, which is a material common in rural areas of Loudoun County and Virginia as a whole.

It is the intent of the Applicant to carefully coordinate building treatments that share form, color, material and shape between all three structures. As such, projecting flat canopy roofs, sunscreens, and trellis shapes would be used at the entrances to the Parish Center and the Parish School. Offsets of the various massing (overlapping rectangles, etc.) might be enhanced with a change in building materials; e.g. from brick masonry to natural stone, from course cut stone to smooth stone. Use of cast medallions, shaped brick, soldier coursing, or patterned brick might also be used to add interest texture and detail. In the use of these architectural devices, a set pattern of motifs would be repeated in each of the three structures in complementary ways.

Corpus Christi's site plan expresses two important ancient ideas. The first is placement of the space for worship on the highest point on the site. This not only allows a place of prominence, but also enables the church to ultimately be nearest the higher intensity uses of the surrounding community, as suggested by the Revised General Plan.

Secondly, as the final site diagram took shape for the Parish campus with input from current parishioners and the Parish priest, it was determined that inclusion of an ancient symbol, the circle, which references the divine, would be appropriate. As such, the main parking area is set within a large circular ring, with parking inserted using more typical orthogonal geometry. As the overall tray of parking will be tilted upward on the site toward the church, the circular form provides a strong visual symbol upon entry to the Parish campus. Moreover, the parking circle is intended to be a gathering place for Parish members as they approach their place of worship, and also to be a setting for church functions and fellowship.

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The paving patterns in the forecourt of the church will create a second circle, thus repeating and returning focus to this unifying symbol as churchgoers proceed from car to sanctuary. The prominence of the circular form in the campus design is a deliberate reflection of the symbol's powerful meaning to both the Parish and its pastor, to whom it represents a community gathering and becoming one people.

The proposed project will develop in phases that correspond with the completion of planned transportation improvements associated with surrounding projects. Specifically, the first phase will be comprised of the Parish Center, which will initially serve as a multi-purpose facility wherein all church activities will occur. The Parish Center will provide a maximum capacity of 335 seats for the principal religious assembly use. This first phase of development will utilize existing transportation infrastructure. The build-out phase of the project may consist of the 1,200 seat church facility, 200-student elementary school, and convent, which will develop only upon completion of transportation improvements planned with adjacent projects.

To this end, the Applicant is seeking approval of the following Special Exception uses:

i. Religious Assembly, church:

The proposed church will have an ultimate assembly capacity of 1,200 seats in the sanctuary or main liturgical space. Offices and other accessory uses supportive of the church (i.e. classrooms, fellowship areas) will be located in the Parish Center. The Parish Center may also serve as the interim church facility during the first phase of project development, with a maximum assembly capacity of 335 seats.

A rectory may also be located on the site. At present, the Parish priest resides in a dwelling acquired by the Applicant in the adjoining Stone Ridge community. However, the Parish may ultimately opt to co-locate the rectory with its other facilities. In such a case, the rectory will be located adjacent to the proposed convent in order to cluster the residential components of the campus.

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Peak utilization of church facilities will occur on weekends, although church operations will take place on a daily basis.

ii. **Education, school for more than 15 pupils:**

The proposed school will provide elementary level education for grades Kindergarten through eight (8), with a maximum enrollment of two hundred (200) students.

iii. **Group living, convent (Section 5-656):**

The proposed convent will be a “Level I – Small Scale” facility that may house a maximum of ten (10) residents, as necessary to support the customary operation of the proposed church and school uses.

The proposed uses will develop pursuant to the evolving requirements and capabilities of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington and the Corpus Christi Parish, respectively. Specifically, ultimate development of the proposed school and convent uses will occur at the option of the Parish pursuant to its program objectives and available resources.

Special Exception - Criteria for Approval

Section 6-1310 of the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance states, *“In considering a special exception application, the following factors shall be given reasonable consideration. The applicant shall address all the following in its statement of justification or special exception plat unless not applicable, in addition to any other standards imposed by this Ordinance”*.

(1) Whether the proposed special exception is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed church, school, and convent uses are consistent with the policies of the Revised General Plan, which allow compatible institutional and other non-residential uses to be located in the Transition Policy Area. The following policies indicate the appropriateness of the proposed uses in the Transition Policy Area:

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Policy: *“Existing businesses in the Transition Policy Area include the Bull Run Quarry, the Luck Stone Quarry and a limited number of nurseries, private schools and institutions, commercial stables, kennels and veterinary services” (General Characteristics, paragraph 3).*

Proposed Special Exception: The Revised General Plan identifies churches, private schools, and similar institutional uses as appropriate within the Transition Policy Area, and other institutional uses exist in close proximity to the Property. Specifically, the private Boyd School (“Arcola School,” SPEX 2008-0021) is located adjacent to the Property. The proposed Corpus Christi Parish will complement the established character of the surrounding community, and further create a civic node serving the needs of both rural and suburban populations.

Policy: *“The non-residential component of the Transition Policy Area will be comprised of uses that represent an appropriate transition from suburban to rural land uses, such as golf courses, active recreation uses, kennels, nurseries and similar commercial uses, public and private schools and other compatible institutional uses. These uses will serve to promote a rural character while serving both rural and suburban populations... New non-residential uses that support residential development, such as schools, churches, small-scale commercial retail and home business occupations/local offices will be organized within the community cores of villages at appropriate scales. Other commercial and institutional uses will be considered in this area if they are compatible with the overall land use pattern” (Land Use Pattern, paragraph 5).*

Proposed Special Exception: The private Boyd School (“Arcola School,” SPEX 2008-0021), located within a former Loudoun County elementary school facility, exists immediately to the north of the Property. The proposed church, school, and convent comprising Corpus Christi Parish will complement this existing institutional use, which will combine to form a distinctive civic node for the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Adjoining neighborhoods consist of the future Westport and Marrwood subdivisions within the Transition Policy Area, and the Stone Ridge planned

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community within the Suburban Policy Area. The proposed Corpus Christi Parish will thus occupy a central location within a growing residential area, from which the spiritual, educational, and social needs of a diverse population may be served.

The proposed campus layout includes substantial open space that will effectively facilitate the desired transition from suburban to rural land uses. Specifically, open space will comprise more than 60% of the site, which exceeds the 50% minimum requirement of the TR-1 Zoning District and is consistent with the policies of the Revised General Plan. Such open space will be located and configured to achieve the desired visual integration of the Parish campus with the surrounding transitional area. In particular, the open space program includes natural buffer areas comprised of preserved vegetation along the site's north and east boundaries, landscaped setback areas, active recreation space, and formal open areas interspersed among the parish buildings combining green and hardscape elements. This combination of open space components achieves a diverse campus landscape that complements and integrates with the surrounding area, and ensures an appropriate balance between the site's developed and open areas.

Policy: *“Large-scale civic or institutional uses requiring more than 15 buildable acres, either individually or in a multipurpose facility, should be located on the periphery of an individual neighborhood or in core areas on roads that can accommodate the anticipated traffic volume” (Community Design Polices, #23).*

Proposed Special Exception: Access to the proposed uses will occur via future Marrwood Drive, which will ultimately connect U.S. Route 50 (John Mosby Highway) and Route 659 Relocated. The Property is further located near the future grade-separated interchange of these roadways, which will provide regional access to the site. As such, a network of collector and arterial roadways will serve the proposed Corpus Christi Parish that are capable of accommodating its projected traffic in both the initial phase of development and at project build out.

The first phase of development will be limited to an interim 335-seat church facility and customary accessory uses (i.e. offices, classrooms, fellowship area), the impacts of

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which can effectively be accommodated by the existing road network per the revised Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA). Build-out of the project will expand the church to a 1,200 seat facility and may further include the 200 student school and convent, but will not occur until road improvements achieving the planned network connections are completed by others. Under such conditions, the TIA indicates that the road network will accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed uses in addition to the traffic projected to accompany adjoining residential development. By coordinating project build-out with the availability of planned road infrastructure, the proposed uses will develop at a scale and intensity consistent with the form and capacity of the surrounding road network.

(2) Whether the proposed special exception will adequately provide for safety from fire hazards and have effective measures of fire control.

All proposed facilities will meet applicable code requirements for fire protection and emergency vehicle access. The site layout includes features intended to provide enhanced access for emergency vehicles and personnel. Specifically, in addition to the two (2) primary site entrances on Marrwood Drive, a restricted emergency vehicle access will be provided near the north parcel boundary. Moreover, a paved emergency access lane will be provided extending from the parking area to the rear of the church and school buildings. The length of the emergency access lane will be determined in consultation with Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Services at the site plan stage of development for the proposed church and school uses, respectively.

(3) Whether the level and impact of any noise emanating from the site, including that generated by the proposed use, negatively impacts the uses in the immediate area.

The proposed uses will not generate noise impacts that would negatively affect adjacent properties. The provision of natural buffer areas along the perimeter of the site will assist in the mitigation of any noise generated by the proposed uses. Such buffer areas will consist of preserved vegetation along the northern and eastern boundaries that will

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be supplemented by hardwood plantings, which will combine to create an effective visual and aural screen.

(4) Whether the glare or light that may be generated by the proposed use negatively impacts uses in the immediate area.

All outdoor lighting will be shielded and downcast to prevent glare onto surrounding properties and roadways per applicable requirements of the Revised 1993 Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance.

(5) Whether the proposed use is compatible with other existing or proposed uses in the neighborhood, and adjacent parcels.

The proposed uses will be located adjacent to parcels developed and/or planned for both residential and non-residential uses. The private Boyd School, a provider of elementary instruction for grades Kindergarten through eight (8), is located immediately north of the Property within the former Arcola Elementary School facility. The proposed Corpus Christi Parish will complement the longtime institutional use of the adjoining parcel, and combine to form a vibrant civic node for the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Several large residential neighborhoods in various stages of development are also located adjacent to the Property. Specifically, the approved but undeveloped Marrwood and Westport subdivisions and existing, but still developing, Stone Ridge planned community surround the property on the south, west and east, respectively. The proposed Corpus Christi Parish will serve the spiritual, educational, and social needs of the future residents of these neighborhoods, in addition to the more than nine hundred (900) families that are existing parishioners, the majority of whom reside in other neighborhoods within the Dulles South area. By locating adjacent to these rapidly growing residential neighborhoods, the proposed uses will be accessible to those who will derive the greatest benefit from their availability. Moreover, the proposed Corpus Christi Parish will enhance the physical character of the community

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and promote a sense of place for its residents through its distinctive yet compatible campus design.

In addition to surrounding land uses, the planned transportation network adjacent to the Property further defines the context for the proposed Corpus Christi Parish. In particular, the planned route of Relocated Route 659 will pass in close proximity to the eastern Property boundary. The future intersection of Relocated Route 659 and Route 50 will be a high volume facility, which current plans identify as a grade separated interchange. Such infrastructure will provide regional access to the proposed Corpus Christi Parish, thus promoting the value of its location as the civic anchor of the surrounding community.

(6) Whether sufficient existing or proposed landscaping, screening and buffering on the site and in the neighborhood to adequately screen surrounding uses.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Revised 1993 Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance, a Type 3 Buffer Yard is provided along a limited segment of the eastern property line. Existing vegetation will be preserved within this required buffer yard, which will be supplemented with hardwood plantings. The Applicant will further retain existing vegetation within a natural buffer area of variable width extending along the remainder of the eastern parcel boundary as well as along the entire length of the northern parcel boundary. At a minimum, the width and quantity of supplemental plantings provided within the natural buffer area will satisfy the requirements of a Type 1 Buffer Yard.

The existing vegetation on the site is comprised primarily of red cedars. It is noted that the quality of such trees is highest along the outer edges of the vegetated area, with interior vegetation lacking equivalent aesthetic value. As such, the Applicant believes the installation of hardwood plantings will create superior buffer areas over time, both in terms of effectiveness as a means of integrating the site with the surrounding community and overall appearance. To further promote these objectives, the supplemental plantings may be installed in irregular intervals to replicate and complement the natural form of the buffer areas. A schedule of such plantings will be

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developed in consultation with the County Arborist at the site plan stage of development.

The proposed preservation of existing tree cover within the buffer areas coupled with the installation of supplemental plantings will achieve a dense natural screen along the project boundaries, and further mitigate the loss of vegetation elsewhere on site.

(7) Whether the proposed special exception will result in the preservation of any topographic or physical, natural, scenic, archaeological or historic feature of significant importance.

As noted above, the site layout will include preservation of perimeter trees along the eastern and northern parcel boundaries, which the Applicant will supplement with additional hardwood plantings. There are no other features of significant environmental, archaeological or historic importance on the Property.

(8) Whether the proposed special exception will damage existing animal habitat, vegetation, water quality (including groundwater) or air quality.

Internal clearing of the Property will be necessary to accommodate development of the proposed uses. To mitigate the loss of such vegetation, the Applicant will preserve existing vegetation along the northern and eastern parcel boundaries within a variable width natural buffer, which the Applicant will supplement with additional hardwood plantings. The provision of natural buffer areas will both mitigate the loss of vegetation elsewhere on site and ensure continuity of animal habitat. Moreover, the proposed site layout provides substantial open space exceeding minimum ordinance requirements. The Applicant will complement such open space with implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, which will combine to effectively protect air and water quality.

(9) Whether the proposed special exception at the specified location will contribute to or promote the welfare or convenience of the public.

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The Revised General Plan encourages the establishment of institutional uses such as churches and schools in the Transition Policy Area with the goal of serving both suburban and rural populations. The Property is located within a portion of the Dulles South area experiencing significant residential growth, and is adjacent to several residential neighborhoods, both existing and approved but undeveloped. Moreover, the Property sits in close proximity to key elements of the regional transportation network, most notably the planned route of Relocated Route 659 and its future grade-separated interchange at Route 50. As such, the proposed Corpus Christi Parish will be located to maximize access to its diverse spiritual, social, and educational services for residents of the Dulles South area, nearby rural areas, and the County as a whole. The location of proposed Corpus Christi Parish will enhance the convenience and welfare of residents in each of the three Policy Areas.

(10) Whether the traffic expected to be generated by the proposed use will be adequately and safely served by roads, pedestrian connections and other transportation services.

As indicated in the enclosed *Traffic Impact Analysis for the Catholic Diocese of Arlington*, prepared by Wells & Associates, Inc., dated January 8, 2009, and revised September 14, 2009, the existing and planned road network will adequately serve the proposed uses. Access to the proposed uses will occur via future Marrwood Drive, which will ultimately connect U.S. Route 50 (John Mosby Highway) and Route 659 Relocated, and the Property is further located near the future interchange of these roadways, which will provide regional access to the site. As such, a network of collector and arterial roadways will serve the proposed Corpus Christi Parish that are capable of accommodating its projected traffic in both the initial phase of development and at project build out.

The first phase of development will be limited to an interim 335-seat church facility and customary accessory uses (e.g. offices, classrooms, fellowship area), the impacts of which can effectively be accommodated by the existing road network per the revised Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA). Build-out of the project will expand the church to a 1,200 seat facility and further include the 200 student school and convent, but will not

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occur until road improvements achieving the planned network connections to the north are completed by others. Under such conditions, the TIA indicates that the road network will accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed uses in addition to the traffic projected to accompany adjoining residential development. By coordinating project build-out with the availability of planned road infrastructure, the proposed uses will develop at a scale and intensity consistent with the form and capacity of the surrounding road network.

Vehicular access to the site will occur via two entrances on Marrwood Drive that will align with the already approved entrances for the adjacent Marrwood Subdivision. In addition to these primary entrances, an entrance reserved for emergency vehicle access will be provided near the northern parcel boundary. The Applicant will accommodate pedestrian access by installing a sidewalk along the Marrwood Drive frontage of the Property, which will connect to pedestrian facilities planned within the adjoining Boyd School and Marrwood Subdivision projects. Such accommodations will ensure the safe and efficient integration of the proposed Corpus Christi Parish with the surrounding transportation network.

(11) Whether, in the case of existing structures proposed to be converted to uses requiring a special exception, the structures meet all code requirements of Loudoun County.

There are no existing structures proposed for conversion with this application.

(12) Whether the proposed special exception will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services.

The Applicant has coordinated with Loudoun Water and the owner of the adjacent Marrwood Subdivision to ensure the provision of adequate public water and sanitary sewer facilities to the Property. The SPEX plat depicts the general locations of such facilities.

(13) The effect of the proposed special exception on groundwater supply.

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The proposed Corpus Christi Parish will rely exclusively upon public sources for water service. As such, the proposed uses will not affect groundwater supply.

(14) Whether the proposed use will affect the structural capacity of the soils.

The soils conditions on the Property are conducive to site development activities. Analysis of said conditions did not indicate any adverse affect of the proposed uses on the structural capacity of the soils.

(15) Whether the proposed use will negatively impact orderly and safe road development and transportation.

The proposed uses will capitalize on planned improvements to the surrounding road network, and will not adversely affect the ability of said network to develop in a safe and orderly manner. Please refer to the enclosed *Traffic Impact Analysis for the Catholic Diocese of Arlington*, prepared by Wells & Associates, Inc., dated January 8, 2009, and revised September 14, 2009, and response to Criterion #10 for further discussion of the area road network and its capacity to accommodate traffic generated by the proposed uses.

(16) Whether the proposed special exception use will provide desirable employment and enlarge the tax base by encouraging economic development activities consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed uses will contribute to the civic diversity of the community, and will further provide additional employment opportunities in the Dulles South area. Such outcomes are consistent with the economic development objectives of the Revised General Plan.

(17) Whether the proposed special exception considers the needs of agriculture, industry, and businesses in future growth.

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Not applicable.

(18) Whether adequate on and off-site infrastructure is available.

The proposed Corpus Christi Parish will be served by adequate on- and off-site infrastructure. Such infrastructure either exists currently or will be available to support the phased development of the proposed uses. Please refer to the responses to Criteria #10 and #12 for further discussion concerning the area road network and public water and sanitary sewer facilities.

(19) Any anticipated odors which may be generated by the uses on site, and which may negatively impact adjacent uses.

The proposed uses are not expected to generate any odors that would adversely affect adjacent uses.

(20) Whether the proposed special exception uses sufficient measures to mitigate the impact of construction traffic on existing neighborhoods and school areas.

Construction traffic will access the Property directly from Marrwood Drive, and therefore will not adversely affect any residential neighborhood streets.

Conclusion

Approval of the requested special exception uses will provide for the development of a church, K-8 elementary school, rectory and convent for the Corpus Christi Parish. Rapid growth in the Dulles South area of Loudoun County has necessitated the need for the Diocese of Arlington to acquire property that will serve both the current and future needs of the Parish. Suitable sites within the Dulles South area have been difficult to find because of size and physical constraints, pricing, and access. Situated near existing and planned regional roads, the site is ideally located to serve the Parish's

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needs. The proposed Parish campus will further serve as a civic landmark and identifying element for the community.

The application is in conformance with the applicable policies of the Revised General Plan and advances the Transition Policy Area goals regarding appropriate non-residential uses in the Transition Area of the County. The Applicant hereby respectfully requests favorable recommendation of this project by the Planning Commission and approval by the Board of Supervisors.