



March 6, 2024

Fauquier County Board of Supervisors

10 Hotel Street

Warrenton, VA 20186

Dear Supervisors,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment (ZOTA) to Article 4, Part 6, the Planned Commercial Industrial Development Overlay District (PCID).

There is presently a single PCID in the County, located in Vint Hill Farms Station. CFFC has long recognized Vint Hill as a special place of historic significance, and in 2013, instigated the memorialization of Vint Hill's historic value to the County with a designated annual day of recognition. CFFC has supported the repurposing of existing structures, and as the PCID is developed, supports the County's resolve in upholding the stated vision for this unique location for uses that "complement surrounding land uses by...attractive architecture, and effective landscape buffering which protect property values in surrounding neighborhoods" 4-601. The proposed ZOTA, by requiring a Special Exception for any new structure with a footprint exceeding 50,000 square feet and for retail sales with floor area totaling 10,000 square feet or greater, is a step in the right direction to ensuring that the appropriate landscaping, buffering and screening of developments of larger scale and size are achieved, and the character and charm of Vint Hill is maintained, and CFFC supports the proposed Amendments.

CFFC understands the commercial value data centers provide to the county. However, we have concerns about data centers being appropriately designed and sited to complement the surrounding land uses in the PCID. Therefore, CFFC supports the change to the PCID as it applies to data centers for the following reasons:

- 1.—Information on the impact of data centers has greatly evolved since 2017 when the PCID was formed, and it is now well-established that Data Centers have a huge impact not only on our county but the state as a whole.
  - a. They are huge users of energy for cooling which in turn is affecting the grid and our continued use of fossil fuels.
  - b. They require large transmission lines to deliver this energy.

- c. Neighbors and the surrounding area are subjected to constant noise and reduced air quality.
  - d. Large parcels of land are often being purchased for data center campuses which results in loss of agricultural land and forest land.
2. Through the SE process, the public will be involved and have input to the Planning Commission (PC) and the BOS.
3. Recently, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) passed a resolution to adopt a data center policy to ensure visual continuity and compatibility with neighboring properties. The SE process would help implement this.
4. This ZOTA should provide greater oversight as to massing and proper siting of data centers.
5. CFFC believes it would be preferable that all data centers in Fauquier County require an SE. This ZOTA will require all structures over 50,000 square feet to have an SE in the PCID.

**Lastly, we would recommend the following:**

1. Under 4-603 Principal Uses Permitted, the description for Data Center be clarified to incorporate the amendment, as follows: Data Center having a cumulative footprint less than 50,000 square feet and using recycled water for cooling and with all new power lines, including transmission or substation feed lines, placed underground.
2. Under 4-605 Special Exception Uses, section (C) be further clarified. For example: “Data Center not using recycled water for cooling and with all new power lines, including transmission or substation feed lines placed underground, and data center exceeding 50,000 square feet and using recycled water for cooling and with all new power lines, including transmission or substation feed lines, placed underground.”
3. Language be developed to prevent applicants from linking up smaller structures (50,000 sq ft or less) that aggregate over 50,000 square feet.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I thank you for considering CFFC’s views on the ZOTA.

Ken Alm

Director of Land Use CFFC