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February 3, 2014

***HAND-DELIVERED***

The Honorable David Marks  
The Baltimore County Council  
Old Courthouse – Second Floor  
400 Washington Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204

RE: Application for PUD for *Loch Raven Commons*  
1300 Joppa Road  
Tax Map 0070, Parcel 1188  
5<sup>th</sup> Councilmanic District, 9<sup>th</sup> Election District

Dear Councilman Marks:

In compliance with Section 32-4-242 of the Baltimore County Code (“BCC”), Joppa Mylander Properties, LLC (hereinafter “Applicant”) submits this application for a General Development Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) for a 9.35± acre site, located at 1300 Joppa Road, in the Towson area of Baltimore County. After reviewing the enclosed information, we hope that you will support the Applicant’s proposal and allow it to proceed through the PUD process.

**I. DESCRIPTION OF PUD PROPOSAL:**

Applicant is an affiliate of The Buccini/Pollin Group (BPG), a developer, owner, and manager of office, hotel, residential, entertainment, industrial, and parking properties in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern United States. BPG has acquired and developed over 7 million square feet of office and retail space and 9 residential communities. One of its major efforts has been the revitalization of downtown Wilmington, Delaware, including the revitalization of 25 blighted or underutilized properties for retail, residential, and entertainment uses. Applicant would like to put that knowledge and experience to work in Towson.

In 2005, Applicant acquired the subject property, which is located on the north side of Joppa Road, west of Mylander Lane. The property is zoned ML-IM (Manufacturing, Light – Industrial, Major) and is currently improved with a 175,000± square foot office/research and development building and associated parking. The existing building dates back to 1955; an addition was added in 1962. The building is now vacant and has been for some time. Efforts have been made

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to lease the building, but, with the building being functionally obsolete, Applicant has been unsuccessful in finding a user. Applicant is exploring alternate uses for the site.

Applicant proposes to redevelop the site with a mixed use development, to be called *Loch Raven Commons*, which will include a maximum of 225 market-rate rental apartment units, 25,000-35,000± square feet of commercial space, and a village green. All existing structures and paving will be removed, and the “right in only” access road from Joppa Road will be closed. The PUD proposal does not include the separately owned 3± acre parcel owned by Loane Brothers, which contains a large, one-story industrial building. A proposed illustrative plan is included with this Application.

*Loch Raven Commons* will have two distinct but interrelated components. Applicant’s team designed the project to take advantage of the unusual shape of the property, which surrounds Loane Brothers property on three sides. The rear of the site, which is somewhat shielded from view from Joppa Road by the Loane Brothers building, will become the residential “Neighborhood” community, and the more visible frontage will become the vibrant and accessible “Village Center.” A public village green, located west of the Loane Brothers building, will connect the two components of *Loch Raven Commons* to each other and also help create integration between it and the adjacent Radio Park development to the west, which has over 200,000 square feet of Class B office space and retail space fronting Joppa Road. The proposed upgrades to the main entrance off of Joppa Road, serving both properties, will also create synergy between the properties.

Applicant proposes 4 residential buildings and an associated community building in the “Neighborhood” component. As reflected on the enclosed elevations, the buildings (4-5 stories in height) would be predominantly masonry and siding and would include balconies, trim around openings and windows, and cornice and/or eave details. Within the buildings, Applicant proposes a maximum of 225 market-rate rental apartments with mostly 1 bedroom (approximately 60% to 80%) and 2 bedroom (approximately 20% to 40%) units. Some 3 bedroom units may be included. The final unit mix will depend on a subsequent market and economic analysis. Amenities would include lobby and leasing area, exercise room, lounge, meeting room, media room, and pool. A limited number of private garage spaces may be available to tenants.

In the “Village Center” component, Applicant proposes 3 one-story commercial buildings, one of which is proposed to be a convenience store with associated fuel service canopy. The other two other commercial buildings could accommodate a variety of uses, including commercial retail, restaurant, drug store, or service-oriented establishments designed to serve the needs of tenants,

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employees, neighbors, and area visitors. The buildings would be predominantly masonry with varied storefronts, signage, cornice/roof details, and similar design elements that will portray a traditional, "Main Street" aesthetic. The fuel service canopy will include similar masonry materials and details, including the columns. Cohesive design will unify the different aspects of the *Loch Raven Commons* development.

Although the site's current ML-IM zoning classification would allow fuel service, by special exception, and some auxiliary retail uses, residential use of the property is permitted only through approval of a PUD. With an approved PUD plan, Applicant could develop the property residentially at a maximum density of 40 density units per acre (equivalent of density available in R.A.E.1 zone). See Section 430.3 of the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations ("BCZR"). Applicant's proposal to develop a maximum of 225 apartment units (maximum 234± density units) on approximately 5.87± acres is consistent with the density allowed by BCZR Section 430.3.C.3.

As recognized in the Master Plan 2020, Baltimore County must accommodate a certain amount of anticipated population growth and employment increases. In order to accommodate its share of growth, the County seeks to encourage high-density redevelopment of underutilized properties in the urban portion of the County. Ideally, this redevelopment would result in compact, high-density, walkable communities with a broad mix of uses in close proximity to civic services, amenities, and employment. Areas particularly well-suited for this growth would be those "located along major roads in commercial corridors, in or adjacent to existing town centers, or on older industrial and warehouse properties." *Master Plan 2020*, pp. 4-5. Responding to this trend, Applicant proposes to take an underutilized industrial property and redevelop it with a dense, mixed-use community with residential units in close proximity to employment, education, entertainment, and retail opportunities in Towson and to provide convenient amenities and services for tenants, employees at adjacent business parks, and area residents.

The Master Plan 2020 designates the subject property as being situated in a number of overlapping planning areas, including the "T5 – Urban Center" Transect, "Employment Center," and "Community Enhancement Area." Applicant's proposal is consistent with the goal of Community Enhancement Areas (CEAs) to encourage area investment where there is the "potential for walkable and sustainable design, ability to complement adjacent land uses, existing adequate public facilities, and limited environmental constraints." *Master Plan 2020*, pp. 30-33. The Plan specifically encourages compact, mixed-use, and walkable redevelopment in CEAs. The proposal is also consistent with the description of the T5 – Urban Center transect as "higher density mixed use buildings that accommodate retail, offices, rowhouses, and apartments." *Master Plan 2020*, p. 31.

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With regard to the “Employment Center” designation, the Master Plan advises that the impact on the supply of land available for future employment uses should be considered. *Master Plan 2020*, p. 136. Applicant has tried unsuccessfully for several years to lease the building for employment uses. The close proximity to hundreds of thousands of square feet of office/flex/industrial uses within well-established business parks has had an impact on the viability of continued use of the property for similar uses. Instead, Applicant has come up with a proposal that will complement, not compete with, the existing uses and, in turn, will help support the employment uses in the area.

As described in this Application, the proposed development meets the criteria for a General Development PUD in Baltimore County and will result in a thoughtfully-designed, vibrant, mixed-use development in close proximity to employment and other opportunities.

## **II. REQUIREMENTS FOR PUD APPLICATION:**

BCC Section 32-4-242(b) specifically requires an applicant to describe the projected impacts of the PUD on the surrounding area, to define the proposed community benefit, and to demonstrate how the project will meet the compatibility objectives outlined in BCC Section 32-4-402. The following information will address those requirements.

### **A. PROJECTED IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT:**

**Water/Sewer:** The subject property is served by public water and sewer service located in Joppa Road, which is adequate to serve the proposed use. Existing water main in Joppa Road is 12 inches in diameter. The existing sewer line is an 8 inch diameter line. The 2013 Basis Services Maps for both sewer and water indicate that the subject property is not within a deficient service area or an area of concern.

**Transportation/Roads:** *Loch Raven Commons* is proposed to have its primary access at the existing signalized intersection of Joppa Road and Lasalle Road. Additional access points are proposed to Mylander Lane, which provides direct access to another signalized intersection with Joppa Road. Both signalized intersections serving the property are currently rated as Level of Service “A” by Baltimore County. Transit service is also available to the site via MTA Bus Stops along Joppa Road near both signalized intersections.

The subject property is not located within a deficient intersection traffic shed as detailed on the Baltimore County 2013 Basic Services Transportation Map, although there is a Level of Service

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“F” intersection located at Joppa Road and Loch Raven Boulevard, which is the result of the westbound thru traffic during the weekday morning peak hour. The planned community will replace an existing 175,000 square foot office building. Given the proposed mix of commercial and residential uses, trip generation comparisons between the previous use and the proposed new development indicate that the new development would not result in any noticeable increase in trips during either the morning or evening peak hour. The effect from this development on the impacted intersection, therefore, would be either neutral or positive because the new development is estimated to generate fewer trips through that intersection during the morning peak hour as compared with the previous office use.

**Environmental:** There are no jurisdictional wetlands on the subject property, and there are no existing forest resources on-site to be protected. The proposal to redevelop the property as a mixed-use community will require compliance with the requirements for afforestation as outlined in BCC Section 33-6-111. Given the urban character of the property’s location and the absence of any adjacent forest resources, this afforestation obligation will, likely, be satisfied by payment of a fee-in-lieu.

**Schools:** The property is served by Hampton Elementary, Loch Raven Technical Academy, and Loch Raven High School. The pupil yield from 225 apartment units is 22 elementary students, 11 middle school students, and 1 high school student. Based on the information provided on the Baltimore County website, all schools are projected to be undercapacity, even with the additional students.

**Police, Fire, and Other Resources:** Life safety services for the proposed development are provided by Baltimore County Police and Fire Departments. Specifically, the site is served by the Towson precinct (700 Joppa Road) for police and the Hillendale Fire Station (6636 Loch Raven Boulevard) Response Area. The Towson police precinct is .79 miles east of the site, and the Hillendale Fire Station is 1.3 miles south.

## B. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Proposed PUD Site Acreage:	9.35± Acres
Existing Zoning:	ML-IM
Existing Use:	Office/Research and Development
Proposed Use:	Mixed Use – Residential and Commercial

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Permitted Density:	Residential use permitted with PUD, up to density in R.A.E.1 Zone (40 units/acre) or 234± density units
Proposed Density:	Maximum of 40 density units/acre or 234 density units for 225 apartments*
Allowed Floor Area Ratio:	2.0
Proposed Floor Area Ratio:	.52±*
Required Number of Parking Spaces:	Residential: 1.5-2.0 spaces/unit, plus visitor parking Commercial: 5 or 16 spaces/1,000 SF GFA, plus additional parking as required by BCZR
Proposed Number of Parking Spaces:	As required by BCZR unless request modification of standards*

\* *Will depend on final concept*

## **C. COMMUNITY BENEFIT**

BCC Section 32-4-242(b)(6) requires that an applicant state how the Planned Unit Development will provide a community benefit. After meetings with you and members of the community, Applicant proposes to provide a financial contribution of \$50,000 as a capital improvement benefit under Section 32-4-242(b)(6)(iii). This money, which is to be combined with the local open space waiver fee of \$20,000 (for a total of \$70,000), is to be used for improvements at an area park or school, at the County's discretion.

## **D. COMPATIBILITY**

Pursuant to BCC Section 32-4-242(b)(5), an application for a Planned Unit Development must include a statement of how the development will comply with the compatibility objectives of Section 32-4-402 of the BCC. In addressing the compatibility objectives, the development must be judged in relation to the "neighborhood." Section 32-4-402(a) defines "neighborhood" to include existing buildings adjacent to and extending from the proposed development to a

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definable boundary, such as a primary collector or arterial street, an area with a significant change in character or land use, or a major natural feature.

Applying this definition, the relevant neighborhood would include the stretch of business and industrial zoning extending from Loch Raven Boulevard, inside of I-695, south to Joppa Road, and west along Joppa Road to the eastern boundary of the Towson Estates residential neighborhood. The neighborhood would also include the non-residentially zoned properties on either side of Lasalle Road, and north of Joppa Road to Cromwell Bridge Road.

The Towson Community Plan, adopted by the Baltimore County Council in 1992, identified this neighborhood as an “Urban Center/Employment Area,” and the zoning and development of the neighborhood generally reflects that designation. The zoning varies from light manufacturing and service employment zones to office and commercial zones. Major business/office parks in the neighborhood include the Towson Business Center, Orchard Business Park, Radio Park, and Maryland Executive Plaza. Along Joppa Road, many existing structures have been converted from single-family homes to commercial or office uses. The neighborhood also includes auxiliary retail and service uses providing goods and services to employees and users of the office and business parks (e.g., banks, dry cleaners, fast food, and casual restaurants). Scattered along the perimeter of the neighborhood along Cromwell Bridge Road and Loch Raven Boulevard are other commercial/office uses, such as the Towson Overlook shopping center, the IWIF office building, and the Days Inn. Directly south of the neighborhood is the Loch Raven Village Community and directly west of the neighborhood is Towson Estates. These communities feature single-family attached dwellings of brick and stone construction.

As described in more detail below, the mixed-use redevelopment of a property will provide a vibrant atmosphere and will be compatible with the neighborhood and its surrounding area.

### **Compatibility Objectives:**

- 1. The arrangement and orientation of the proposed buildings and site improvements are patterned in a similar manner to those in the neighborhood.**

Proposed buildings and circulation patterns are arranged to create a street that links Joppa Road to Mylander Lane. This street will serve as a common “Main Street” that directly connects the adjacent Glory Days restaurant and existing commercial buildings to the west with the new community. New streets and circulation patterns follow similar patterns of adjacent neighborhoods, creating a pattern of small walkable blocks.

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- 2. The building and parking lot layouts reinforce existing building and streetscape patterns assure that the placement of buildings and parking lots have no adverse impact on the neighborhood.**

New buildings “front” onto and face new internal streets and existing buildings to the west, with parking mostly on-street, behind and/or beside buildings. New internal streets will include on-street parallel parking, marked crosswalks, and streetscape elements such as trees, light poles, and furniture. Large expansive parking lots, typical of most “strip retail developments,” are not part of the plan. Such an arrangement of buildings, streets, and parking, together with a robust streetscape character, will create a greater sense of a “street grid,” similar to surrounding neighborhoods, and a more walkable and urban-like environment.

- 3. The proposed streets are connected with the existing neighborhood road network wherever possible and the proposed sidewalks are located to support the functional patterns of the neighborhood.**

New streets connect to Joppa Road and Mylander Lane at existing intersections. Existing sidewalks will be improved, and new sidewalks along new streets will connect to adjacent buildings and to existing adjacent sidewalks.

- 4. The open spaces of the proposed development reinforce the open space patterns of the neighborhood in form and siting and complement existing open space systems.**

A new centrally located village green or plaza will be located adjacent to and immediately east of the existing Radio Park buildings, creating a shared outdoor space that will unify the existing and new buildings. Additional open spaces are proposed on the north end of the property as part of the proposed residential buildings/district. These spaces will provide a natural element to this otherwise heavily developed area.

- 5. Locally significant features of the site such as distinctive buildings or vistas are integrated into the site design.**

There are no distinctive buildings on the site, or immediately adjacent to the site. However, new open spaces and the orientation of new residential buildings take advantage of views to the natural wooded area that exists to the north of the site.

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**6. The proposed landscape design complements the neighborhood's landscape patterns and reinforces its functional qualities.**

The landscape design proposes streetscape improvements, including trees, sidewalks, light poles, furniture, and hardscape areas for outdoor shopping and dining, that will support a walkable and urban-like character. Streets, sidewalks, and streetscape will connect to existing streets. A proposed village green/central plaza will support small programmed public events; the proposed landscape design of this space will include a flexible lawn aligned with street trees, together with hardscape, seating, and circulation areas to support active, high-pedestrian traffic. Additional open spaces will include more passive spaces to support residents living in the development; these spaces will include a more robust landscape and planting approach with quieter sitting areas, shade elements/trees, informal lawns, and plantings to create year-round interest.

**7. The exterior signs, site lighting, and accessory structures support a uniform architectural theme and present a harmonious visual relationship with the surrounding neighborhood.**

Exterior signs, site lighting, and accessory structures will be designed to complement both proposed and existing buildings. Site signage will be predominantly masonry and precast materials, similar to the proposed architecture for the buildings. Site lighting (such as street lights, bollards, and/or other similar light elements) will be decorative, to give the "feel" of a more urban-like environment and streetscape. Lighting for signs, landscape lighting, and/or other "ambient" lighting will be indirect.

**8. The scale, proportions, massing, and detailing of the proposed buildings are in proportion to those existing in the neighborhood.**

Buildings immediately to the east (Merritt Properties and Loane Brothers), to the west (Radio Park), and to the southwest (Towson Marketplace) are typical large, long, commercial/office/manufacturing/flex buildings. The buildings proposed will be smaller in scale than those building and will be more similar in scale and massing to the commercial buildings directly across Joppa Road from the site. The design and detailing of the buildings will be more typical of a small, traditional, late 19<sup>th</sup> and/or early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial building.

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Once you have had an opportunity to review the application and illustrative site plan and to consider Baltimore County agency and community comments, we hope that you will support Applicant's request for a General Development PUD for the *Loch Raven Commons* project.

Very truly yours,



Patricia A. Malone

PAM/bl

Enclosures

cc: Mr. Robert E. Buccini