

Press Release

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This is smart growth! Creating a vibrant, walkable Oakton

In the face of opposition to a proposed plan for the 33-acre site of an old AT&T office building and its acres of parking, the 28-year-old Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG), is weighing in. CSG is a veteran advocacy organization for walkable communities and is joined by its partners – the Sierra Club, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling, Fairfax Families for Safe Streets, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, Nature Forward, Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance, and YIMBYs of NoVA in supporting the plan

“The community of Oakton and Fairfax County have the opportunity to say yes to a winning vision for a more walkable, vibrant Oakton center – by supporting the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment before the Fairfax County Planning Commission this Wednesday, Feb 26,” said Sonya Breehey, Northern Virginia Advocacy Manager and Fairfax County resident.

“The Comp Plan Amendment is fully in keeping with the County’s vision for more walkable communities, and would support the upcoming rezoning proposal to replace the aging, obsolete AT&T office building and its acres of parking, with much needed housing in a walkable community with new parks and greenspace,” said Breehey.

“Our organization, founded by the region’s leading environmental groups, has been supporting walkable, mixed-use, inclusive and transit-accessible development since our founding in 1997,” said Stewart Schwartz, CSG’s Executive Director. “We have shown how this pattern of development reduces driving and greenhouse gas emissions and toxic air pollution, and increases walking, biking, and transit trips.”

Bill Pugh, AICP, CSG’s Senior Policy Fellow and a professional transportation planner added, “Don’t just take our word for it – studies by the region’s Transportation Planning Board have confirmed these transportation results. That’s why Fairfax County and the region’s Council of Governments have adopted a regional plan for transit-accessible communities as the most

sustainable and equitable way to grow, and reduce the amount of driving. The proposal for the AT&T site fits within the county and regional visions for reducing reliance on driving, reducing climate pollution, and providing more housing.”

“The plan amendments will enable development of 850 much-needed homes for a range of incomes, a mix of uses, including grocery and retail, a network of connected, pedestrian-friendly streets, significant open space including a park, trails, tree preservation, and updated stormwater management,” said Breehey.

“The Comp Plan Amendment calls for improved transit, pedestrian and bicycle improvements and an innovative approach to the Chain Bridge and Jermantown intersection that will improve drivers’ travel time and make it safer to walk and bike in the area. In conjunction with the amendments, Fairfax Supervisor Dahlia Palchick is expected to direct staff to undertake an area-wide transportation study,” Breehey noted, “offering a set of transportation alternatives that in combination with the new development will support a more sustainable future.”

Schwartz concluded, “We are committed environmentalists, we are committed to more housing options, and we are champions for smart growth. That’s why we support the Oakton plan.”

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