TOWN OF Herndon VIRGINIA

MEMORANDUM

To: **Chair Michael Romeo, Planning Commission**

From: **Chair Leslie P. Blaker-Glass, Architectural Review Board (ARB)**

Date: **February 5, 2026**

Subject: **ARB Review of HTOC Development Plan #24-01 at 575 Herndon Parkway**

This memo serves as a report of the ARB's preliminary review of the architectural designs included in HTOC Development Plan #24-01, which proposes to change the property zoning at 575 Herndon Parkway to allow for redevelopment with a stick over podium mixed use building.

Stick over podium construction is an established building approach, that combines a frame infrastructure with a concrete podium. This architectural design methodology provides increased density and flexibility, while creating functional, aesthetically pleasing, and contextually relevant structures. The podium will also serve as a horizontal separation between the different occupancies, between the multi-family residential units, retail, and office uses proposed. The design consideration for this construction type also provides for structural efficiency and varied architectural elements. The existing improvements on the property would be demolished.

The ARB conducted a preliminary review of this design proposal at October 2, 2024, and December 4, 2024, work sessions. This memo relays to the Planning Commission the items highlighted in the Board's discussion which includes comments that should be addressed prior to an official ARB application submission. As a preliminary review, the evaluation of the design was not comprehensive, and the comments below address general and high-level design matters where more attention is necessary as the project progresses though town reviews. The Architectural Review Board is highly supportive of this project overall and has greatly appreciated the applicant's involvement in work sessions, and attention to feedback provided by the Board. The Board looks forward to ongoing dialog with the applicant through the next phase of the project when we review the fully developed designs in the future.

Should you have any further questions related to this memorandum, I would gladly make myself available at a convenient time for us to connect.

Board Discussion:
After presentations by Town staff and the project representatives, the board discussed the project and provided the following feedback.

Impact of HTOC Architecture. New construction in the HTOC will play an outsized role in defining the character of the Town of Herndon. 575 Herndon Parkway concerns one of the most important blocks within the town for establishing town identity. Located immediately adjacent to

the Herndon Metro Station Plaza, the proposed building will serve as a gateway symbol of the town. As such, the ARB encourages the use of artistic elements such as murals on the walls of this development with an opportunity for community feedback. The intended conceptual design for artistic elements should be provided to the Board. Attention to detail in the design especially along the active frontages will be very important when the formal application is reviewed by the Board.

Overall Scale and Massing. The Board noted that the overall scale and approach of dividing up the massing with separate architectural expressions is appropriate and consistent with the building approved for 555 Herndon Parkway.

Overuse of Panels. The Board stated that as secondary or accent material, panels may have value, however their use as a principle exterior treatment should be limited given their overall flatness. Where used, paneling should be managed to ensure appropriate scale and articulation is achieved. The Board supports the use of some paneling on the southwest corner when various textured surfaces are used in concert with plane changes and color variations. Furthermore, the Board appreciates the sensitive use of paneling for this building as a reference to the historic train depot.

North Elevation. The middle composition of the north elevation should be better resolved prior to the formal ARB submission. This is the project's most public facing elevation with frontage along Herndon Parkway. The Board supports employing a heavier and more articulated cornice to separate the lower levels from the top levels. Consideration should also be given to redesigning the exterior treatments including cladding at the upper levels to create a completely distinct and subtle composition that is visually subservient to the "townhouses" on the lower levels.

Storefront Design. The storefronts are designed with full-height glass systems. While this is a departure from more traditional storefront designs, it presents an opportunity to have a strong visual connection between the interior and exterior spaces. For that to be successful, however, the glass must be transparent rather than reflective. The first-floor canopy above the storefront system around the building at the southwest corner should be extended to create additional visual interest and help better manage sunlight going into this commercial space.