May 8, 2014

Mr. Chris Fletcher, Director of Development Services

Morgantown, WV

**Subject: VFW Property, 494 Spruce Street, Morgantown, WV**

Dear Mr. Fletcher,

I am writing on behalf of the Morgantown Municipal Bicycle Board to express our support for the Campus Acquisitions development of the VFW Property, located at 494 Spruce Street in Morgantown. We understand that the development will be 11 stories featuring 92 four-bedroom mixed-use dwelling units with vehicle, motorcycle, and 101 bicycle parking spaces and will create an exciting housing option for Morgantown residents near High Street and the Downtown West Virginia University (WVU) Campus.

Morgantown will benefit in many ways if this project is realized. The main reason we support the project is due to the high number of bicycle parking spaces that will encourage residents to consider alternative transportation. We also support the project because it is ideally located adjacent to downtown Morgantown and WVU, which will allow residents to bike, walk, ride the Mountain Line bus system, use the Personal Rapid Transit (PRT), and connect these sustainable transportation options for a multi-modal system that will:

* Encourage young people to move to Morgantown,
* Reduce traffic congestion and pollution,
* Promote community health and well-being,
* Reduce maintenance costs on roadways,
* Boost local business revenues,
* and enhance the physical environment downtown.

It is anticipated that younger students and professionals will live in the development, and according to the American Public Transportation Association, 19-31 year olds are driving 25% less and travelling 40% further using public transportation when compared to the generations before them. Also, according to the WVU College of Business and Economics & the Bureau of Economic Research, the state’s young workforce and potential future young workforce (ages less than 44 years old) will continue to drop from 75% in 1950 to 52% in 2030. We must build infrastructure that supports cycling and alternative transportation to retain more young people and boost our local and regional economy. Unlike the rest of West Virginia, Monongalia County’s population growth is projected at 26.5% from 2010 to 2030. We can capitalize on our growth by supporting the young demographic by developing buildings that they want to live in that encourage and fit their active lifestyles.

In May of 2012, Morgantown was recognized by the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) as West Virginia’s first ‘Bicycle Friendly Community’. The Bronze Level award will only be held through 2016 unless renewed through future efforts. In fact, the 2012 Morgantown Bicycle Plan, which was adopted unanimously by City Council, lists Priority 56 to encourage the City to support and take action in order to obtain the Silver Award by 2015 and Gold by 2020. Priority 44 of the plan was to ‘review current implementation and consider expansion of the Planning and Zoning Code requiring developers of multi-family dwellings to provide bicycle parking and storage.”

According to the Morgantown Planning and Zoning Code (Code), which was updated in 2012, the VFW Property falls within the General Business District (B-4). As stated in the Code, the first purpose of the B-4 District is to:

“Promote development of a compact, pedestrian-oriented central business district consisting of a high-intensity employment center, vibrant and dynamic mixed-use areas, and residential living environments that provide a broad range of house types for an array of housing needs.”

The Code also states that “One (1) indoor, secured, sheltered bicycle storage space per dwelling unit” must be provided. I understand that Campus Acquisitions does not plan to request a waiver for the bicycle storage and embraces the idea required by the Code.

Also, to reinforce the need for developments that realize alternative transportation options are important, actions and items within these plans support the areas cycling initiative:

* Morgantown Monongalia Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MMMPO) draft 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
* Monongalia County Planning Commission’s 2004 Comprehensive Plan

Let’s encourage young, motivated individuals to move here and boost our economy? Let’s encourage development that is consistent with or complements our Zoning Code, Morgantown Bicycle Plan, MMMPO’s 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, and Monongalia County Planning Commission’s 2004 Comprehensive Plan. Let’s take action based on these plans to reduce congestion and pollution, increase transportation efficiency, and decrease residents distance required for travel. This project will encourage and promote community health and well-being, improve the physical environment downtown and boost the local businesses and Morgantown economy.

Sincerely,

Name

Chairman, Morgantown Municipal Bicycle Board