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City of Dublin Planning and Zoning Commission
c/o Sarah Holt, Senior Planner
City of Dublin
5200 Emerald Parkway
Dublin, Ohio 43017

RE: Amlin Crossing Concept Plan

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of Schottenstein Homes and its various consultants, I am providing this letter as further background on the revised Concept Plan that is being presented for your review for a residential development proposal to be known as Amlin Crossing. Our team has taken into account the feedback which was received from the Planning and Zoning Commission on December 8, 2021, and over the past seven months has made a concerted effort to address them in earnest. The result is a revamped site plan with a reduction of 80 homes from what was proposed in the initial submittal. It is our belief that the revised plan will create a vibrant and unique project that the Commission stated was its goal.

Product Types

The plan that is before you contains three product types, two of which Schottenstein Homes has created specifically for this site and have been uniquely designed by the architectural firm of Acock Associates. The first product type brings particular excitement for our team. It consists of single-family detached homes to be located in the northern half of the development with all homes fronting to significant open spaces. Rarely seen in modern communities in central Ohio, this type of neighborhood provides garages to the rears of all units, providing a great aesthetic for residents. The integration of large green areas just outside the front door of each home, when combined with a robust pedestrian trail system within the development, will provide an inviting environment for outdoor living and activities. The architectural designs of these homes were created specifically for Amlin Crossing, and provide a style that is unlike anything built in Dublin. The result will be a distinct character which results in a small village feel.

The second unique product is a patio home with rear-loaded garages, to be located in the southwestern portion of the site. This is intended to appeal to empty nesters. It will add to the variety of residential product types not only within the proposed development, but within the broader area of southwest Dublin. It will provide for an appropriate transitional use and density as one moves westward toward Cosgray Road and away from the railroad tracks to the east and the future overpass of that railroad that is anticipated to be part of the Tuttle Crossing Extension.

The final product type will be townhomes. Located along the eastern two-thirds of the southern portion of Amlin Crossing, these units meet a growing demand in Dublin and throughout central Ohio. While the market already provides many traditional single-family and multi-family housing options, townhomes are in demand as they provide a unique middle ground of providing residents with ownership

opportunities without yard maintenance responsibilities. In combination with the other two products that are proposed in Amlin Crossing, this will be a community with a blend of housing options.

Application of Southwest Area Plan

At the previous meeting before the Planning and Zoning Commission, much was made of the Southwest Area Plan's recommendations for this property. Understandably, this is the starting point for evaluating a development proposal and is consistent with future planning activities that are the hallmark of the City. However, the strict application of the recommendations of that plan misses a very key and material point: The major organizing element of the plan as it relates to the Amlin Crossing site was an assumed location for the future Tuttle Crossing Extension. That street was shown looping generally from southeast to northwest through the applicant's site and connecting to a traffic circle within the property, effectively serving to eliminate the continuation of Cosgray Road northward. The effect of the schematic street location was to create a large development area along the southern portion of the property. See below:



Southwest Area Plan (Avery West detail) map with general project location

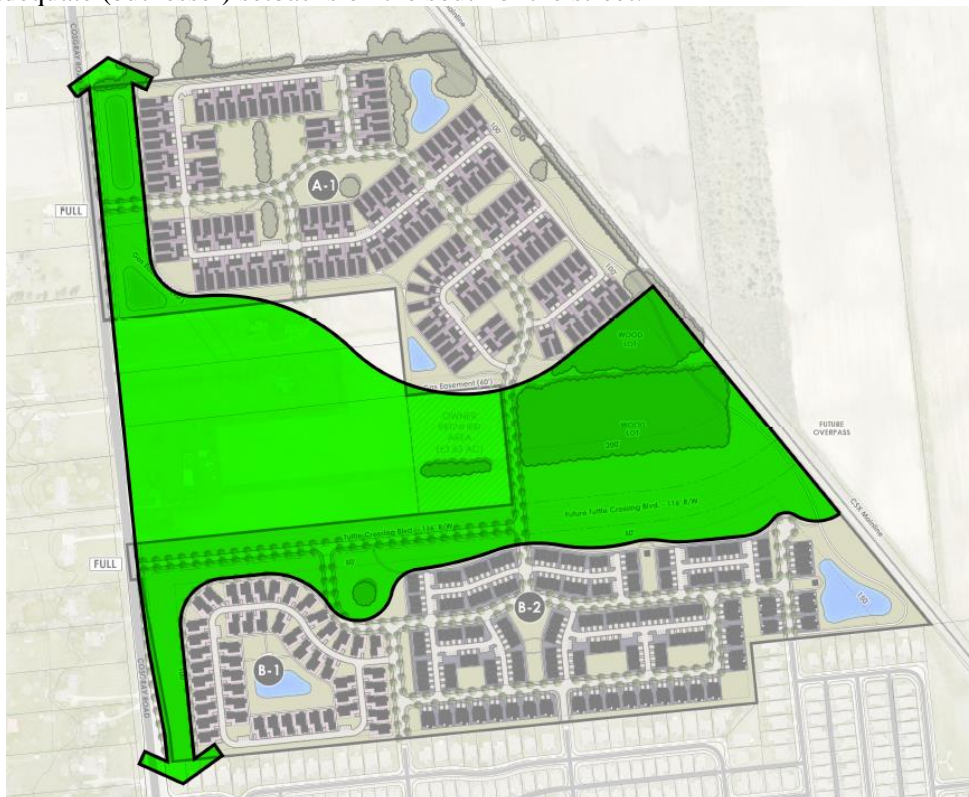
The recommended locations of uses and densities was a direct function of the street alignment shown in the plan. However, fast forward some ten years after the Southwest Area Plan was adopted, and the most significant assumption about that plan is no longer in place. The City now prefers a future alignment of the Tuttle Parkway Extension that flattens the loop configuration and instead runs generally east-to-west and parallel with the southern boundary of the Amlin Crossing site. A traffic circle is no longer envisioned by the City, and the Tuttle Crossing Extension is to run to Cosgray Road on the west and beyond. Planning staff is recommending that all of the right-of-way for the Tuttle Crossing Extension be placed on this site, further dictating the nature and viability of residential uses to the south

of it. The substantial change in this assumption fundamentally influences likely and sensible development patterns on the subject property.

It is important first to note that the Southwest Area Plan is labeled as “schematic”. This is a nod to the fact that as assumptions change, so too may the plan. The effect of changing the preferred location of a major thoroughfare has turned the area plan on its head. From a land planning perspective, the Concept Plan that is before you makes sense. Compliance with a plan that reflects past thinking with out-of-date assumptions for infrastructure should not be the litmus test for evaluating this proposal. Such rigidity would ignore the real and substantial impact that the now-preferred location of Tuttle Crossing has on the entire area.

This impact is far-reaching. A 116-foot wide right-of-way is being provided across the site, occupying 6.5+/- acres of land (this is in addition to 1.5+/- acres that are required to be dedicated to the City for Cosgray Road). The Southwest Area Plan also calls for 200-foot setbacks from the new right-of-way, which would encompass another 16.2+/- acres if provided on both sides, and in conjunction with the Tuttle Crossing right-of-way would consume 22% of the site’s acreage. But that setback was recommended in the context of the previous street alignment, which sought to create a greenbelt on each side. The previous alignment was such that the street created a pinch point in the southeastern portion of the property where there would be no room for development and a greenway would occur by default. With the street looping northwesterly, it created a large buildable area in the southwestern portion of the property which provided plenty of room to accommodate a sizable setback and meaningful development. The flattening of the street with the currently preferred location, and its shift southward, has squeezed the developable area in the south of the site, especially if the area plan’s recommended setback is implemented.

The better approach is to recognize that the vision of the Southwest Area Plan and the provision of open space is better captured by providing generous green spaces to the north of the street while still providing adequate (but lesser) setbacks on the south of the street:



Further informing the plan (based on the preferred Tuttle Crossing Extension alignment) is the fact that this street will include an overpass at the railroad tracks on the eastern edge of the site. This has a direct effect on the aesthetics and feel of residential development, as this condition is more typical in a denser neighborhood than next to an upscale single-family detached neighborhood. Similarly, higher densities are customary next to 4 or 5 lane roads with relatively high rates of speed and volumes of traffic. Given the preferred location of the Tuttle Crossing Extension, it now becomes the clear guiding element for transitioning density. The area between the existing neighborhood and the future Tuttle Crossing is clearly appropriate to continue slightly higher densities but with a mix of product types.

As to the northern portion of the site, it provides significant residential density of 4.66+/- units per acre within the development zone. While less dense than the southern portion of the site, this is within the area plan's suggested range of 3-5 units per acre. Care has been taken to create a community that can be integrated with future mixed use development to the north. While mixed use development to the north is not likely to occur at any time in the near future due to fractured ownership across a number of parcels, the northern portion of Amlin Crossing is designed to feel like an extension of a small mixed use Village. A vehicular access stub is being provided, and there are many opportunities to provide pedestrian connections in the future.

Development patterns in the area further demonstrate that relatively lower density is appropriate to the north and higher density to the south. The following summary of development immediately to the south of Amlin Crossing is taken from a summary of zoning legislation that was approved by the City of Columbus in 2009:

- **The area proposed for rezoning will include a maximum of 659 residential units, which when combined with 855 units built or to be built on areas of the original development not included in the rezoning, will result in an increase of 168 units. The gross density for the area being rezoned will be 8.0± units per acre, and the effective density for the overall development will be 6.2 units per acre, slightly above the 5.5± units per acre originally approved, and well below the over 10± unit per acre density of the property immediately to the west of the southern portion. The reallocation of the TND districts will result in an increase of open space of 3± acres.**

Development to the south has resulted in over 1,500 residential units consisting mainly of small width single-family residential, attached multi-family residential, and condominiums. On the other hand, to the northeast of Amlin Crossing the Ballantrae Woods subdivision has been developed at 2.72 units per acre (Dublin Case Number 15-004Z/PDP). Moreover, the Ballantrae subdivision is typified by larger-lot single-family development. The area directly north of the project contains rural residential uses. So, the built conditions surrounding Amlin Crossing further validate the placement of proposed product type and densities in the new Concept Plan..

As noted in the Commission's Record of Action on the first Concept Plan, its concerns with that proposal included site layout, proposed density, decreased setbacks, and the desire for a unique residential product with unique architectural design and meaningful integration of open spaces. The layout has been completely modified with the new plan, and the proposed density and setbacks have been provided in the new Concept Plan in a manner that adheres to sound planning principles given the preferred location for the Tuttle Crossing Extension. Two of the three product types that are being put forward have never been built by Schottenstein Homes before, demonstrating its intent to develop a community that is truly different. The integration of the different areas of the development with open spaces is the main principle of this plan, and will result in a distinctive development.

In closing, Schottenstein Homes urges the Commission to recognize the differences between the Southwest Area Plan and the current City vision for the public street coming through the site. Amlin Crossing should be viewed in the context of these differences. The substance of the development proposal should override adherence to a plan that is out of date and based on different assumptions than are present today. Hopefully the Commission also will recognize the good faith effort that has been made to transform the site plan and residential products into something that is responsive to the comments provided at the earlier Concept Plan review.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Aaron L. Underhill
Attorney for the Applicant