

Narrative and Impact Statement
Conditional Use Permit for Commercial Tree Stump Grinding and Mulch Sales
Tax Map Parcel Number 35-32

The Applicant, NFQRE2 LLC (“Norfleet”), seeks a Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) to authorize the development of a commercial tree stump grinding and mulch sales use on that certain parcel of land, consisting of approximately 74.49 acres, and shown on the records of the Stafford County Commissioner of the Revenue (“COR”) as Tax Map Parcel Number 35-32 (the “Property”). The Property is zoned to the County’s A-1, Agricultural Zoning District, which permits a commercial tree stump grinding and mulch sales use through the issuance of a CUP by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors (the “Board”). *See* County Code § 28-35.

Background

Norfleet is an established and reputable regional entity that has manufactured and distributed premium quality mulch products since 1965 at its current site located at 103 Central Road, Fredericksburg, VA. Norfleet’s operation involves the collection and grinding of tree stumps and trees to create mulch, which is a highly malleable and environmentally conducive organic product used for soil stabilization. Norfleet is known for its 100% pure bark pine and hardwood mulches, which offer a range of benefits for landscaping, gardening, and bio-retention uses. There exists a robust demand in the region for Norfleet’s premium mulch products, as Norfleet’s sales revenue exceeded \$6.3 million in 2021. Norfleet’s dedicated customer base includes local landscapers, homeowners, and independent garden centers, and Norfleet has recently expanded to co-packing agreements with national retailers such as Lowe’s, Home Depot, and Walmart. Norfleet is also the proud long-time supplier of mulch to the United States Botanic Gardens located on the grounds of the United States Capitol.

Norfleet’s current site at 103 Central Road employs approximately forty-five (45) employees and has been operating at capacity for over two years. Consequently, Norfleet seeks an additional site to accommodate its rapidly growing operation, and the Property serves as an ideal location for that purpose. Norfleet therefore seeks this CUP to authorize the development of commercial tree stump grinding and mulch sales operation (the “Project”) on the A-1 Zoned Property in accordance with the Generalized Development Plan (“GDP”) prepared by Legacy Engineering and submitted herewith. Norfleet anticipates that Project would initially employ approximately 15-20 people and would expand to approximately 35-45 employees consistent with Norfleet’s 103 Central Road operation within a period of 2 to 3 years.

As depicted on the GDP, the proposed Project will include an approximately 20,000 square feet (“sf”) warehouse facility and associated parking. While the proposed CUP would encompass the entire Property, the majority of the Project area will be utilized passively for the storage of processed mulch pallets, bulk materials, and raw materials as depicted on the GDP. As shown on the GDP, these passive storage areas are generally located around the perimeter of the site surrounding the warehouse facility and processing areas.

Impact of Proposed Use on Public Facilities

Public Highway Impact:

The Property is located off of Warrenton Road proximate to its intersections with Hartwood Road and Truslow Road. The Project will be accessed through a full-service entrance off of Warrenton Road designed to Virginia Department of Transportation (“VDOT”) commercial standards, as depicted on the GDP.

The traffic from the Project will primarily be generated from homeowners and landscape contractors purchasing the mulch onsite via loading trucks and from loading trucks which deliver raw materials to the site for processing. Based on Norfleet’s experience with its 103 Central Road location, the Project can be expected to generate approximately fifty (50) Vehicle Trips per Day (“VPD”) on average.

While the Institute of Transportation Engineers (“ITE”) does not publish traffic counts specific to commercial tree stump grinding and mulch sale operations, the traffic generated by such use is analogous to that of a wholesale nursery, which is a by-right use in the County’s A-1 District. Based on the ITE rates (10th ed.) for a wholesale nursery, the Project would be expected to generate approximately sixty (60) VPD.

The Project will not adversely impact public highway facilities due to the low traffic volume generated by the proposed use.

Water and Sewer Utilities: The Project will be served by a private onsite sewage system and private well designed, constructed, and installed in accordance with Virginia Department Health (“VDH”) standards. As a result, the Project will have no impact on public utility facilities.

Stormwater and storm drainage: The Property will be served by onsite storm water management facilities. There are two outfalls located within the resource protection areas (“RPA”) of the Property as generally depicted on the GDP. The stormwater facilities to serve the Project shall comply with the construction, design, water quality, water quantity, and all other applicable standards and criteria prescribed by state and local regulations.

Environmental: There exists resource protection areas (“RPA”), wetland features, and designated FEMA floodplain areas on the Property as identified on the GDP. The proposed layout of the Project is designed to minimize any impacts to these environmentally sensitive areas of the Property as depicted on the GDP. Moreover, any impact or disturbance to such environmentally sensitive areas shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Schools/Recreational Facilities: The proposed Project is not a residential use, and thus will have no direct impact on the County’s levels of service for schools and recreational facilities.

Noise, dust, and smoke emissions: The proposed Project will not generate excess noise, dust, or smoke emissions. Noise from the mulch processing activity will be mitigated by the layout of the Project depicted on the GDP, which features the passive storage areas surrounding the perimeter of the site and serving as a buffer from the warehouse facility and processing areas. It will further be mitigated by the vegetative buffers and setback areas generally depicted on the GDP. Sound pressure levels from the proposed use shall comply with the applicable provisions of Chapter 16 of the Stafford County Code of Ordinances. Similarly, any dust and smoke emissions shall comply with the applicable state and federal standards applicable to the proposed Project.

Cemeteries and Historic Sites: There are no known archaeological sites, historic structures, historic features, or places of burial on the Property.

Adjacent properties: The Property is bounded to the south by Warrenton Road with vacant A-1 zoned land, and individual single-family dwellings located on the opposite side. There exists primarily vacant, forested A-1 zoned land with individual single-family dwellings interspersed to the north, east, and west of the site. The Project is consistent with the rural and agricultural character of the surrounding areas and will not adversely affect or impede the development of adjacent properties. Any impacts to adjacent properties will be mitigated by the vegetative buffers and setback areas generally depicted on the GDP and the layout of the Project, which features the passive storage areas surrounding the perimeter of the site to serve as an additional buffer from the warehouse facility and processing areas.

Fire and Rescue: Fire flow protection for the Project will be provided through two pond systems located on either side of the RPA of the Property which will include the installation of permanent dry hydrants. Each pond system will have a minimum storage capacity of 60,160 cubic feet. The County's Fire and Rescue Department has provided preliminary concurrence that the foregoing constitutes an acceptable means of fire protection to serve the Project in accordance with Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code Sections 507.1 and 2810.9. The ultimate water supply locations, dry hydrant design, and installation details for the Project are subject to permitting and approval by the County at site plan.