



Town of Haymarket  
15000 Washington Street, #100  
Haymarket, VA 20169  
703-753-2600

# STAFF REPORT

**PC Meeting Date:** January 14th, 2025  
**Agenda Title:** Special Use Permit Application #2024-002, Religious Assembly for Haymarket Islamic Center  
**Zoning District:** B-1 Town Center  
**Requested Action:** Recommendation of approval of Special Use Permit #2024-002



The applicant is requesting to operate a tenant space as a place of religious assembly.

The property is part of the QBE property, located on the eastern end of the corporate limits of Haymarket, at the intersection of Washington Street and Greenhill Crossing Drive. The address for this site is 14600 Washington Street, Suite 155 or Suite 160.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the Special Use Permit SUP#2024-002, Religious Assembly for Haymarket Islamic Center, with conditions.

## **BACKGROUND**

---

Request: The applicant, Haymarket Islamic Center, has requested to operate a tenant space as a space for religious assembly.

Site Location: 14600 Washington Street, near the northeast corner of the intersection of Washington Street and James Madison Highway. The potential tenant location within this address is either Suite 155 or Suite 160.

Zoning: This site is zoned B-1, Town Center.

Surrounding Land Uses: Immediately on site near the main building is a Lewis Home single family home that has been repurposed as a restaurant carry out use. The site is surrounded by R-2 zoned properties to the north, west, and south of the property, with R-1 zoned single family neighborhoods and the Town Park just outside of the adjacent R-2 zoned properties. To the west of the site in Prince William County are a multitenant commercial building and residential subdivisions.

Background and Context: The QBE building has housed multiple tenants representing various types of businesses in Town. Haymarket Islamic Center, the applicant, has been using a community space in a nearby neighborhood outside of Haymarket to hold prayer service multiple times a day as part of the Muslim faith. The applicant is proposing to use a tenant space in the QBE building to hold these daily prayer services as well as an assembly space to hold special Ramadan services. The goal of this use is to provide a more convenient location for prayer services in the Muslim community in west Prince William County.

The proposal does not expand the existing site and will occupy only a single tenant space based on the timeline of approval.

Town Staff are reviewing this application based on the below definition of religious assembly in the Zoning Ordinance. Per this definition, this use is approved by-right only in the T-C Transition Commercial zone and approved via SUP in the B-1 Town Center, B-2 Business Commercial, and I-1 Light Industrial zones, necessitating an SUP application for religious assembly at this location.

### Zoning Ordinance Reference Article II: Definitions

*Public assembly.* Facilities that accommodate public assembly for sports, amusements, or entertainment purposes. Typical uses include auditoriums, sports stadiums, convention facilities, religious, and incidental sales, and exhibition facilities.

Additional Analysis for Matters to be Considered in Special Use Permit Application Review follows.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

---

### **Matters to be Considered in Application Review (per Section 58-4.28 of the Zoning Ordinance)**

- (1) The nature of the proposed use, including factors such as traffic, noise, light, hours of operation, and number of employees involved.

The use will be contained to the tenant space the applicant has leased. There will be little to no additional light or noise greater than that of existing tenants at this building. Depending on the time of year, the dawn prayer service may be much earlier than most tenants at this building. There is a significant increase in projected car traffic potentially during Friday afternoon prayer service, and especially during the month of Ramadan. The applicant has provided a submittal showing the projected amount of traffic and vehicles that would use the parking on the property. The property owner has provided a tabulation for each individual tenant space's parking requirements (adjusted to allowable occupancy standards) for consideration. Current Zoning Ordinance requirements for religious assemblies are 1 per 4 seats. The parking for this tenant space is functional if the number of spaces counted are correct. From observation, the number of spaces counted in the submitted parking tabulation exceeds the number of marked spaces on site.

The Haymarket Police Department has confirmed they help with guiding traffic for Sunday services for one of the existing churches in Haymarket. However, the current number of officers employed and on duty at that time can only limit their help to the one church. The volume of services that might require traffic help by this proposed use would strain the Police Department's resources that are already allocated within the existing community. Please see the attached email from Haymarket's Police Chief on this subject.

- (2) The character of the existing area, including existing structures and structures under construction, existing public facilities, and public facilities under construction, and private, commercial and/or service facilities available within the existing area.

The use will not alter the existing structure in any way, and there are no areas under construction that will be affected by this use. Customers from the other tenant spaces may struggle to find parking in the existing lot at certain times of day and during parts of Ramadan due to the frequency/length of the prayer services, but for most hours of the day the parking of this lot will not be significantly affected.

(3) The area's designation on the town's comprehensive plan, and relevant text provisions of the plan.

Town Comprehensive Plan. 1.2.9 Community Design Policy

*Commercial/Residential Blend East of Town's Center*

“Traveling east from the central portion of town, Haymarket unfolds in a pleasant mix of older, residential homes and low intensity commercial uses such as a veterinary clinic and a Baptist Church. This blend of uses continues to the eastern town limit, where a neo-colonial residential development is across the street from public uses in two Sears houses fronted by a planned village green. The two Sears structures fit this area architecturally and historically and should be preserved, if at all possible. Almost all the land north and south of Washington Street is developed. Much of the available land on the north side of Washington Street seems well suited to low intensity commercial uses, with adequate buffering to separate it from residential neighborhoods. Whenever possible, existing residential buildings should be converted to commercial use, rather than have new buildings constructed, to continue the open, small town atmosphere and sense of place.”

The proposed use has adequate buffering from existing residential neighborhoods and does not qualify as an adaptive reuse of a residential building. This use will continue the open small town atmosphere due to no structural changes. While the traffic volume may increase heavily in this area due to the proposed use, the use itself reflects existing businesses mentioned in the comprehensive plan, and the use does not alter the sense of place within the community.

(4) The minimum off-street parking area required, and the amount of space needed for the loading and unloading of trucks.

The routine loading and unloading of trucks will not be affected by the change in use so long as the main entry/exit points onto the site remain open. The site has not been altered

(5) Whether the public health, safety and welfare will be preserved, and any reasonable conditions necessary for such preservation.

The increases in vehicle traffic at certain times of the day caused by the proposed use may negatively affect the pedestrian and car traffic using the existing tenant spaces due to overcrowding. Consideration should be given to conditions affirming occupancy standards and attendance standards.

(6) Any other factors relating to the purposes of zoning that the Planning Commission and/or Haymarket Town Council, in its legislative discretion, shall consider as relevant.

The current Zoning Ordinance only states religious assembly as defined within “Public Assembly.” Aside from the parking requirements for religious assembly, there are no congregation attendance requirements or other measurable factors that would allow Town Staff or the Planning Commission to evaluate at face value a church site versus a smaller tenant use such as the one presented in this application. As referenced in the above sections, the proposed use of a religious assembly for the Haymarket Islamic Center does not significantly alter the site as it is contained within one tenant space and reflects the existing character of this side of the Town.

The frequency of the prayer services and the projected attendance of Friday services and Ramadan events may cause a highly intensive use of the parking lot that will be of detriment to the other tenants at the QBE building unless managed. With these effects considered, Town Staff recommend approval of SUP #2024-002 for the religious assembly of the Haymarket Islamic Center at 14600 Washington Street, with recommended conditions including the applicant providing certificate of occupancy once obtained and the applicant provide a carpooling plan to reduce number of vehicles used during large services.

### **Public Notice and Input**

The Town posted notice of public hearing for the SUP application for all residents of the Town in the Prince William Times on November 21<sup>st</sup> and November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The Planning Commission held a public hearing for this application on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

### **Timing**

The Planning Commission has until March 10, 2025, which is 90 days from the first public hearing date, to act on the proposed Special Use Permit (SUP) proposal. A recommendation to approve or deny the requests would meet the 90-day requirement.

### **STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

---

Thomas Britt, (703) 753-2600

[tbritt@townofhaymarket.org](mailto:tbritt@townofhaymarket.org)

### **ATTACHMENTS**

---

A—Special Use Permit Application

B—Applicant Narrative, Prayer Schedule, and Expected Attendance/Parking

C—Parking Tabulation provided by the property owner

D—Haymarket Police Department response on helping with religious assembly