



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

STAFF REPORT

TC Meeting Date: April 7, 2025
Agenda Title: Special Use Permit Application #2024-002, Religious Assembly for Haymarket Islamic Center
Zoning District: B-1 Town Center
Requested Action: TC to review Special Use Permit #2024-002 and citizen feedback
Staff Lead: Thomas Britt, Town Planner



The applicant is requesting to operate a tenant space at 14600 Washington Street, Suite 155 or Suite 160, 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 Haymarket Planning Commission previously recommended approval of SUP#2024-001 with conditions in the January 14th 2025 meeting. Please see the attached Planning Commission minutes for reference.

BACKGROUND

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

Site Location: 14600 Washington Street, north of the intersection of Washington Street and Greenhill Crossing Drive. The potential tenant location within this address is either Suite 155 or Suite 160, noted on their proposal.

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 east 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 Ramadan services during the month it takes place. The goal of this use is to provide a more convenient location for prayer services in the Muslim community in west Prince William County. Currently the closest area to hold daily prayer services is in Manassas, and small community spaces are being temporarily used for prayer services currently. This proposal will allow for a more permanent location for the Haymarket Islamic Center to hold daily prayer services for the Muslim community in West Prince William County.

There would be five daily prayer services held, with the number of attendees varying based on the day of the week and time of day. Attached to this Staff Report is a proposal from the applicant describing the use of the tenant space with the prayer schedule. Since March 3 Town Council Meeting, the applicant has provided an updated narrative with the start time of the earliest prayer service depending on the time of the year (attachments D and E). Additionally, Ramadan services may have social activities taking place in the tenant space afterward. Friday afternoon Jummah prayer service will be split into 1:45pm and 2:45pm services to ease traffic on site (attachment E).

The proposal does not expand the existing site and will occupy only a single tenant space.

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 minimum number of parking spaces required to be provided for this use is 37.5, rounded up to 38 spaces. On site the application claims 185 spaces, which replaced the crossed out 150 spaces. The Town Planner inspected the site on March 25, 2025, and counted 132 marked spaces on site. Additional spaces were parked by cars at Suite 137 (the southeast corner of the building) but there are no visible markings for spaces in that area of the site. Town Staff recalculated the landlord submitted parking tabulations for the entire site (161.4) and calculated 161 spaces for just the current uses plus the addition of the religious assembly. The proposed number of patrons and cars as stated in the applicant narrative will exceed not only the required amount of spaces for the site but would also cause the site to

potentially require upwards of 183-223 spaces for Jummah prayers and Ramadan events. Existing conditions of the parking spaces on site are visibly marked spaces on the west side of the QBE building; re-striping is most needed on the east side of the site along the border of the Town and Prince William County, especially by the dumpster enclosures.

The applicant has provided a service by service estimate of the amount of vehicles that would use the site. Currently no traffic study for the site has been conducted to account for current vehicle traffic or future traffic projections if this use is approved. VDOT statistics from January 2022 show average daily traffic along the section of Washington Street that passes QBE is 10,000 vehicles per day. The last data available for the back of the QBE site or anywhere else on site is from 1994, which is not reflective of modern traffic.

During Ramadan events, members of the congregation will volunteer to help guide cars to parking when traffic increases during that event. 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. Prince William Police can also be contacted to aid in traffic movement if necessary, per attached email correspondence with Haymarket's Police Chief and the landlord.

(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 unless doors are added to aid in increasing occupancy, 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. There will be a moderate noise increase for neighboring residents during the evening Isha prayer service in the summer, which would start around 10pm.

(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 within the Town because of the open space separating the building from Bleight Drive and Alexandra's Keep Lane, but there is minimal buffering between the QBE building and the adjacent subdivision in Prince William County. This proposal 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 as a place of religious assembly 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.

Section 58-7.1 of the Zoning Ordinance is written below:

Sec. 58-7.1. - Minimum off-street parking and loading.

- (a) Minimum standards. At the time of erection of any main building, or at the time any main building or its accessory uses is enlarged, or the use changed, all provisions of article XIII shall be met along with minimum required off-street parking and loading space with adequate provision for entrance and exit of motor vehicles, in accordance with the following table
- (b) Parking space as required in this section shall be on the same lot with the main building; except that in the case of buildings other than dwellings, spaces may be located as far away as 750 feet. Every parcel of land used as a public parking area and motor vehicle ways shall be surfaced with all- weather surfaces, excluding gravel surfaces. It shall have

appropriate guards where needed as determined by the administrator. Any lights used to illuminate such parking areas shall be so arranged as to reflect the light away from adjoining premises in a residential district.

The minimum parking requirements for a religious assembly or church are 1 spot per 4 seats or attendees. While this site can accommodate this tenant's proposed use during regular prayer services, the Friday services and Ramadan celebrations may cause overflow of the parking onto the grass on site. In meeting with the applicant and the Zoning Administrator, the amount of spaces the applicant may need to use is 250, which exceeds the 132 marked spaces provided on site. Due to two of the current uses on site being restaurants and breweries, there is a chance on some weeknights and Fridays that parking will overflow into the grass or elsewhere on the lot. Per Section 58-7.1(a) of the Zoning Ordinance, approval of this SUP would be a change and an enlarging of an accessory use on site and necessitates the paving of the lot to accommodate. Per Section 58-7.1(b) of the Ordinance, if paving is not completed by landlord to accommodate for overflow, if public parking is needed, overflow areas must still be surfaced with all-weather surfaces.

Town Staff and the landlord met on site on March 31, 2025 to discuss Town Council's request to provide striping on the paved portions of the site to provide more visible parking options on site for this use as part of a potential condition of approval. Per the discussion on site and a landlord submitted sketch of a draft striping plan, the site could be striped to show 201 marked spaces (attachment H). The number of spaces on the striping proposal may be reduced to 198 based on fire lane requirements.

The routine loading and unloading of trucks will not be affected by the change in use, as the entry and exit points onto the site and the existing loading bay into the building will not be obstructed.

(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 where the applicant provides Town Staff with an occupancy card and the final occupancy permit.

(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 Town Council to evaluate at face value a church site versus a smaller tenant use such as the one presented in this application. Town Staff have reached out to Prince William County’s Building Department for projected occupancy standards for each tenant space. In conversation with staff from the Prince William County Building Department, it is possible for either tenant space to hold the projected number of attendees to the prayer services, but there would need to be additional doors installed in the tenant space depending on the building’s ingress/egress arrangement, and potentially a new fire alarm and sprinkler system depending on the final occupancy calculation. 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. The space must have adequate parking as well to accommodate for the change in use and intensity of this new use in order to comply with Section 58-7.1 of the Zoning Ordinance.

With these effects in mind, Town Staff recommend that the Town Council consider the impact of the use on the parking of the site and of the current tenants operating on site prior to voting on this application.

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 Thursday February 13th 2025, and Thursday, February 20th 2025.

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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ATTACHMENTS

- A—Special Use Permit application for SUP#2024-002
- B—Planning Commission minutes
- C—Satellite imagery of site
- D—Applicant submitted narrative
- E—Updated applicant narrative

- F—Landlord submitted Parking Tabulation with Staff tabulation included
- G—Landlord resubmitted Parking Tabulation based on current tenants
- H—Landlord sketch of proposed striping plan of paved surface on site
- I—correspondence with Haymarket PD on directing traffic on site
- J—landlord and Haymarket PD correspondence discussing PWC Police directing traffic on site