



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

July 24, 2008

MEMORANDUM

MCPB 07/31/08
Item #18

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director of Parks *MR*

FROM: Daniel Hertz, SilverPlace Project Manager
Department of Parks *DH*

John Carter, Chief *JC*
Urban Design and Special Projects
Planning Department

SUBJECT: **SilverPlace**
139,700 Gross Square Feet of Office Space
Approximately 300 Housing Units
CBD-1 Zone
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring
Sector Plan for the Silver Spring CBD

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the plan developed through the SilverPlace charrette process (Charrette Plan) to serve as the basis for (1) the Construction Appropriation request to the Montgomery County Council and (2) the initiation of the Montgomery County land use regulatory process.

INTRODUCTION

Project Goals

SilverPlace is designed to serve as a center for creative planning, park development and environmental stewardship on the Commission-owned land at 8787 Georgia Avenue (MRO Site). It will feature a new consolidated headquarters for the Montgomery County side of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). As a model of design excellence, SilverPlace will feature a mix of uses, provide outstanding public spaces, include housing, and provide environmentally sensitive design in the Silver Spring Central Business District.

The goals for SilverPlace include the following:

- Consolidate the offices of the Department of Parks and the Planning Department into a new Montgomery Regional Headquarters (MRO) to serve the public more efficiently
- Create a mixed-use development compatible with the adjacent neighborhoods that serves as a model of design excellence and best development practices
- Provide housing to serve a range of incomes including a minimum of 30 percent affordable housing

- Create outstanding indoor and outdoor public spaces for the general public
- Develop a new MRO to meet or exceed the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for Gold Certification
- Develop a residential component that incorporates “green design” initiatives
- Ensure wise transportation management, safe pedestrian circulation, and adequate parking
- Reduce public costs for the new MRO by leveraging the value of the Commission’s land through the use of a public/private partnership

The Charrette Process

The purpose of the SilverPlace design charrette was to bring all stakeholders together to reach consensus on a design concept that meets the goals and objectives the Commission for the use of the MRO Site. The charrette was held June 3 – 7, 2008 at the Crowne Plaza hotel adjacent to the MRO Site, and it was widely advertised. More than 100 individuals participated in the process led by a team of highly experienced professionals, Torti Gallas and Partners, SmithGroup, and Michael Vergason Landscape Architects.

Over the course of the week, the participants collaborated in designing a plan that accomplished the purposes of the charrette. At the beginning of the process, the participants described their aspirations for and concerns about the reuse of the MRO Site. Among the issues discussed were:

- The larger context in which the redevelopment will take place (i.e., finding the appropriate mix of uses and density in an environment of increasing energy costs)
- Aspects of the relationship of the site to its neighbors (i.e., the site’s location as a gateway from the adjacent residential neighborhoods to the Silver Spring Central Business District, particularly as these relationships affect height, density, and types of uses)
- Specific considerations to be taken into account such as pedestrian connections, traffic, quality of the buildings and open space, and environmentally friendly development

The findings of the charrette, a day-by-day synopsis of the charrette activities, and a wealth of supporting material may be found at <http://www.silverplaceworkshop.com/index.html>

Additional Due Diligence and Design Activities

Following the design charrette, a presentation of the findings to the Planning Board on June 19, 2008, and the Board’s affirmation of the concept developed at the charrette, the technical team conducted further analysis and design. The result of these activities is the Charrette Plan which is referred to in the Development Services Agreement between the Commission and SilverPlace, LLC as the “Development Plan Documents.” The Charrette Plan incorporates the drawings and supporting material required to estimate construction costs and land value. This information is intended to be used by the Commission to obtain an appropriation to complete the design and construction of the new MRO.

The additional due diligence work included:

- Completing the title report and boundary surveys
- Identifying easements existing on the MRO Site
- Completing the geotechnical and Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

Additional design work included:

- Adding detail to the plan developed as a result of the charrette to show general landscaping concepts, stormwater management, and sewer and water lines
- Estimating excavation requirements
- Preparing an architectural narrative for the new MRO describing basic building parameters necessary to estimate construction costs
- Preparing “Concept Pricing Package” drawings consisting of floor plans, sections, elevations, and related details
- Preparing draft LEED Credit Scorecards

THE CHARRETTE PLAN

The attached Charrette Plan includes the new MRO building, a low-rise (4-story) residential building, a high-rise (6- to 9-story) residential building, an open space between the MRO and the low-rise residential building, public courtyards, and an interior street connecting Planning Place with Spring Street. The attached View From Spring Street shows the public space and MRO building. This plan has been devised to act as a transition between the adjacent residential neighborhoods and the adjacent high-density development of the Silver Spring Central Business District by placing low-rise buildings along Spring Street with height and mass increasing in the part of the site adjacent to the commercial uses of the CBD.

The main features of the Charrette Plan are described in the following paragraphs.

MRO Program Summary

The MRO will consist of a 7-story wing connected by an atrium to a 3-story wing as shown in the attached Conceptual Building Sections. Public service space such as a reception area, the hearing room, public meeting rooms, and a library will be on the first floor of both wings of the MRO with the primary public entrance leading from Georgia Avenue into the atrium. The attached Conceptual First Floor Plan displays the concept for the hearing room and other public spaces. There will also be a second public entrance directly from the open space behind the MRO.

The 3-story wing at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street will be the closest part of the MRO to the Woodside Station residential neighborhood and will house the hearing room and a limited amount of office space. The 7-story wing will be located at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Planning Place along the boundary of the site closest to the Silver Spring CBD. There will be a separate employee entrance on Planning Place. The 7-story wing will include more than 91 percent of the total MRO office space on floor plates of approximately 15,000 gross square feet (gsf) as shown on the attached Conceptual Second Floor Plan. Pairs of floors will be connected by interior stairs to facilitate collaboration.

The total building program floor area is 139,700 gsf. On May 8, 2008, the Planning Board reviewed a Program of Requirements (POR) presented by staff and directed staff to modify the program for use in the charrette. A summary of the amount of space in the POR as modified to incorporate the Planning Board’s comments and the amount of space in the Charrette Plan follows in the table below.

Table 1: MRO Building Program Summary			
Item	Staff	Per 5/8/08 Board Review (GSF)	Per Charrette Plan (GSF)
Headquarters Building Program Areas			
• Public Service Space Program	14	25,500	25,000
• Office Program	380	110,000	114,700
Total Building Program	394	135,500	139,700

The building will be constructed as a Class A office building and will meet LEED Gold standards. The foundation system will be concrete flat slab. The ground floor containing the public service spaces and will have a floor-to-floor height of 16 feet.

Construction of the MRO will be staged so that there will be only one staff move. During the first stage, the 7-story wing will be constructed. When it is ready to be occupied, staff will move from the existing MRO and a temporary hearing room will be built in the 7-story wing. At that point, the existing MRO will be demolished and the 3-story wing and atrium will be constructed.

The Concept Pricing Package includes a 5,000 square foot mechanical penthouse area that has not been included in the Program Summary and has been omitted from the table above in order to provide a consistent comparison between the Program Summary and the Charrette Plan. The Concept Pricing Package drawings also include optional areas for the Planning Board’s consideration, a 12,000 gsf daycare center and a below-grade 23,900 gsf parking level with 50 parking spaces. These two areas have been included in the drawings as alternates in order to obtain an understanding of their cost implications. Costs are being estimated with and without the daycare center and parking level.

Public Space Program Summary

The MRO Site will be developed to provide exemplary public open spaces and connections between adjacent residential neighborhoods and the Silver Spring CBD.

The principal public space is a large open space located between the new MRO and the low-rise apartment building. This area includes the mature willow oak trees that will be retained and a hardscaped area that will serve as an entrance to the MRO’s atrium. This public space will function as an important pedestrian connection between the northwest portion of the Woodside Park neighborhood and the Silver Spring CBD.

In addition to linking the on-site development directly to Georgia Avenue, the extension of Planning Place will provide a pedestrian connection between the portion of the Woodside Park neighborhood immediately north of the MRO site and Georgia Avenue. In order to minimize cut-through vehicular traffic, the intersection of the Planning Place extension and Spring Street will be restricted to a “right-in, right-out” movement.

Residential Program Summary

The residential program consists of two multifamily buildings, related open spaces, and an underground garage. The buildings will include 30 percent affordable housing, 17.5 percent workforce housing and 12.5 percent Moderately-Priced Dwelling Units.

A 4-story multifamily building of approximately 125 units will face the residential portion of Spring Street. Units in this building will average 1,000 square feet.

A high-rise multifamily building of approximately 175 units will be located across the Planning Place extension from the low-rise building. Units in this building will also average 1,000 square feet.

Residential parking will be in an underground garage beneath the apartment buildings. The underground parking entrance will be on the Planning Place extension.

ANALYSIS

This report is intended to describe aspects of the SilverPlace project relevant to the Commission in its role as owner of the new MRO and seller of the residential development land. The Planning Board will, in due course, be presented with a Project Plan application (and Subdivision, Preliminary and Site Plan applications) for its consideration as part of the normal regulatory review process. The Project Plan for SilverPlace will be required to meet the findings in Article 59-D-2, and all regulatory reviews will be in accordance with law. Additional analysis will be required to examine the impact of the proposed development on the traffic and schools. The following paragraphs provide a preliminary analysis of the findings based on the information available for the Charrette Plan before the Project Plan is submitted.

Conformance to the Standards in the CBD-1 Zone

The SilverPlace Charrette Plan has been designed to conform to the development standards in the CBD-1 Zone. The table on the following page summarizes conformance with the development standards in the CBD-1 Zone.

Table2: Analysis of Zoning Standards		
Item	Required/Allowed	Proposed
Zone	CBD-1	CBD-1
Site Area (square feet):		
• M-NCPPC Building Lot	NA	63,486
• M-NCPPC Parking Lot	NA	<u>77,620</u>
• Total	22,000 minimum	141,106
FAR, Maximum	3.79 with a bonus for additional affordable housing	3.19 with a bonus for additional affordable housing
Gross Floor Area (maximum square feet):		
• M-NCPPC Offices	NA	139,700
• Housing (approximately 300 units)	NA	<u>311,000</u>
• Total	534,791	450,700
Building Height (feet)	90	90
On- Site Public Use Space	20% of lot area	28% of lot area
Parking:		
• Offices (2.4 parking spaces/1,000 square feet X 30 percent credit)	235	NA
• Residential (estimate, 1.25 spaces per unit)	382	360

Conformance to the Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan

The SilverPlace Charrette Plan has been designed to conform to the Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan. Under the Sector Plan, the property is recommended for public and semi-public uses in the CBD-1 Zone (p.30 and 32). The Sector Plan also identifies the site for potential housing (p. 72 and 151).

The Sector Plan provides flexibility for building design and uses. This flexibility also allows Silver Spring to respond to market changes without cumbersome revisions to the Sector Plan (p. 29).

The Sector Plan provides urban design guidelines for development (p. 72 and 73). The proposed SilverPlace project has been designed to conform to the guidelines as follows:

- Pedestrian connections between Spring Street and Fenton Street extended have been provided
- Pedestrian connections from Spring Street to Georgia Avenue along the Planning Place extended have been provided
- An attractive pedestrian environment has been proposed by creating short blocks, defining streets with buildings, and providing extensive streetscaping along Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and Fenton Street extended
- The open space provides a significant amenity on the edge of the CBD

Compatibility with the Adjacent Neighborhood

The SilverPlace Charrette Plan has been designed so that the location, size, design, operational characteristics and staging of SilverPlace are compatible and not detrimental to the existing and potential development in the general neighborhood.

The proposed SilverPlace locates the lowest buildings (3 to 4 stories) adjacent to the existing neighborhood. The tallest buildings are located closer to the Silver Spring CBD, adjacent to the existing hotel and parking garage and away from the existing neighborhood. Vehicular access to the site is located along Planning Place instead of Spring Street and away from the adjacent neighborhood.

The high-rise housing is separated from the neighborhood by Fairview Park with access from the extension of Planning Place. The housing could be constructed in one or two phases without a detrimental impact to the adjacent neighborhood. The existing surface parking will need to be removed during construction.

Provision of a More Efficient and Desirable Design than Could be Achieved Under the Standard Method

The SilverPlace Charrette Plan has been designed to be more desirable than if it were designed to meet the Standard Method criteria. The amenities such as the large open space accessible to the public, the pedestrian connections, the streetscape, and the improvements to Planning Place extended provide both on-site and off-site amenities that significantly exceed the requirements in the Standard Method.

Provision of Moderately Priced Dwelling Units

Thirty percent of the total units will be affordable housing. The affordable housing will be distributed between Moderately Priced Dwelling Units and Workforce housing.

Forest Conservation

The project will preserve three existing, large willow oak trees. The remaining trees will be replaced by additional landscaping on-site and within the public right-of-way of Spring Street.

NEXT STEPS

During the month of August 2008, staff and SilverPlace, LLC will:

- Incorporate additional Charrette Plan changes requested by the Planning Board
- Complete the construction cost estimate and obtain independent verification
- Negotiate the value of the land to be sold supported by verification of reasonableness of the value by independent appraisals
- Prepare a request for the Construction Appropriation for the Planning Board's review and approval

In September 2008, staff will seek the Board's approval of the Construction Appropriation package and, once approval is obtained, submit the appropriation request to the County Council for review and approval.

Architectural design will commence upon County Council's approval of the Construction Appropriation. This work will include preparation of a Project Plan application and other appropriate development applications to conform to the regulatory review process.

CONCLUSION

The staff recommends approval of the Charrette Plan to serve as the basis of the Construction Appropriation request to the Montgomery County Council, and also as a basis for the initiation of the Montgomery County land use regulatory process.

ATTACHMENTS

- SilverPlace Charrette Plan
- View From Spring Street
- Conceptual Building Sections
- Conceptual First Floor Plan
- Conceptual Second Floor Plan

SilverPlace Charrette Plan



MRO Program Space	
7-Story Wing – Above Grade	101,500 gross sq. ft.
3-Story Wing – Above Grade	23,100 gross sq. ft.
Total – Above Grade	124,600 gross sq. ft.
Below Grade	15,100 gross sq. ft.
Total MRO Program Space	139,700 gross sq. ft.
MRO Building Height Above Grade	
7-Story Wing	90 ft. Excl. Mechanical
3-Story Wing	Approximately 40 ft.

View From Spring Street



