**MCPB** Item # 3/6/08



## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE:

February 11, 2008

TO:

Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA:

Rose Krasnow, Chief

Catherine Conlon, Subdivision Supervisor

**Development Review Division** 

FROM:

Erin Grayson (301-495-4598)

**Development Review Division** 

**REVIEW TYPE:** 

Preliminary Plan of Subdivision

**APPLYING FOR:** 

Approval of a bank of up to 3,400 square feet with three drive-through.

aisles

**PROJECT NAME:** Commerce Bank – Nicholson Lane

CASE #:

120070620

**REVIEW BASIS:** 

Chapter 50, Montgomery County Subdivision Regulations

ZONE:

C-2

LOCATION:

North

**MASTER PLAN:** 

North Bethesda/Garrett Park

APPLICANT:

· Commerce Bank

**ENGINEER:** 

Patton Harris Rust & Associates

ATTORNEY: . .

Miller, Miller & Canby

**FILING DATE:** 

January 30, 2006

**PREVIOUS** 

**HEARING DATE:** October 18, 2007 **HEARING DATE:** March 6, 2008

#### **SUMMARY**

The Commerce Bank – Nicholson Lane preliminary plan is a proposal to remove the existing structure on the 0.75-acre subject property and construct a 3,327 square foot bank with three drive-through aisles. The bank building is proposed to be located in the middle of the site, surrounded by parking on the northern, eastern and western sides. The three drive-through aisles are located on the southern side at the rear of the proposed structure. Vehicular access points are proposed from Nicholson Lane and Huff Court. The Commerce Bank – Nicholson Lane preliminary plan was previously reviewed by the Planning Board and, at that time, the Board expressed concern over the suburban character of the proposed bank layout as it does not comply with the urban environment envisioned by the White Flint Sector Plan. At the applicant's request, the item was deferred to provide the applicant with an opportunity to address the Board's concerns.

# **PREVIOUS PLANNING BOARD HEARING** (Attachment A-1 – Staff Report dated September 25, 2007)

The subject application was filed on January 30, 2006, and, after staff review, was presented to the Planning Board on October 18, 2007. At that time, staff's overall recommendation was for conditional approval of the plan. The staff report noted, however, that Community Based Planning staff had concerns about the location of the proposed bank building. Specifically, that a bank facility located in the middle of the property and surrounded by a parking lot does not meet the intent of the White Flint Sector Plan to develop an urban center with a lively pedestrian environment. In Community Based Planning staff's opinion, this proposed design was not in substantial compliance with the Master Plan. Nonetheless, an overall recommendation for approval was made based upon the fact that the application proposes a standard method development that is not required to undergo site plan review under Section 59-D-3 of the County Code, and Subdivision staff's belief that this limited the Board's ability to restrict building location.

During the October 18, 2007 hearing, the Planning Board expressed support for the Community Based Planning staff position that the proposed preliminary plan failed to comply with the recommendations of the White Flint Sector Plan. The applicant's representatives argued that the C-2 base zoning of the property does not allow the Board to restrict the location of a permitted use in the zone when site plan review is not required. Furthermore, the applicant's representatives stated that moving the building would require substantial re-engineering of both site topography and the existing storm drain on Huff Court, and necessitate a retaining wall along the northeast portion of the site. These changes, they argued, would adversely affect both the applicant and the future pedestrian environment. The Planning Board was not satisfied that the applicant's arguments had merit and recommended that the applicant provide more concrete evidence that relocating the building was not feasible. The applicant's representatives requested a deferral in order to explore additional options and return to the Board with a more detailed analysis.

**APPLICANT'S CURRENT POSITION** (Attachment B-1 – Letter of Justification from Applicant)

The applicant has chosen to return to the Planning Board with the same preliminary plan that was brought before the Board on October 18, 2007. The applicant's justification for not locating the bank facility in the northeast corner of the site, a location suggested by Staff and the Planning Board, is as follows:

- Substantial costs (60% increase in the original site construction budget)
- Operational constraints (anticipated client mode of arrival is by car)
- "Pedestrian friendly" features proffered by the applicant in a landscape and lighting plan will greatly improve the current pedestrian environment along the property frontage (additional trees, plantings, benches, attractive staircase to bank)
- Neither the Subdivision Regulations nor preliminary plan review allow for the exact location of the building to be determined at this time
- The proposed bank use should not be held to the urban vision of the existing Sector Plan because it is a temporary use, and the site will be redeveloped along with other properties
  in the area after an updated Sector Plan is adopted.

#### STAFF'S CURRENT POSITION

In staff's opinion, the applicant has not provided the type of additional justification that was requested by the Board during the first hearing to support their position that it is infeasible to relocate the proposed bank building. Specifically lacking are any plan drawings which illustrate that, because of site constraints, relocation of the building would not result in a development that achieves the sector plan objectives. Absent this information, Community Based Planning staff continues to find that unless the proposed bank building is relocated, the application does not substantially conform to the White Flint Sector Plan and should be denied (Attachment C-1 – CBP Supplemental Memorandum).

In order to approve a preliminary plan application, the Board must find that it is in substantial conformance with the applicable master plan or sector plan. The Board indicated in October that the location of the building is critical to making this finding on this site. Since the applicant has not changed the location in any way, it is Subdivision staff's opinion that the application should be denied. Alternatively, the Board could find that events have occurred to render the Sector Plan recommendations no longer appropriate. It is staff's opinion, however, that there is no justification for that.

#### **Attachments**

Attachment A-1 – Staff Report dated September 25, 2007 (includes previous Community Based Planning Memorandum)

Attachment B-1 – Letter of Justification from Applicant

Attachment C-1 – Community Based Planning Memorandum

**MCPB** Item # 10/18/07



## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** 

September 25, 2007

TO:

Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA:

Rose Krasnow, Chie

Catherine Conlon, Subdivision Supervisor

**Development Review Division** 

FROM:

Erin Grayson (301-495-4598)

Development Review Division

**REVIEW TYPE:** 

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**ZONE:** 

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LOCATION:

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**MASTER PLAN:** 

North Bethesda/Garrett Park

**APPLICANT:** 

Commerce Bank

**ENGINEER:** 

Patton Harris Rust & Associates

**ATTORNEY:** 

Miller, Miller & Canby

FILING DATE:

January 30, 2006

**HEARING DATE:** October 18, 2007

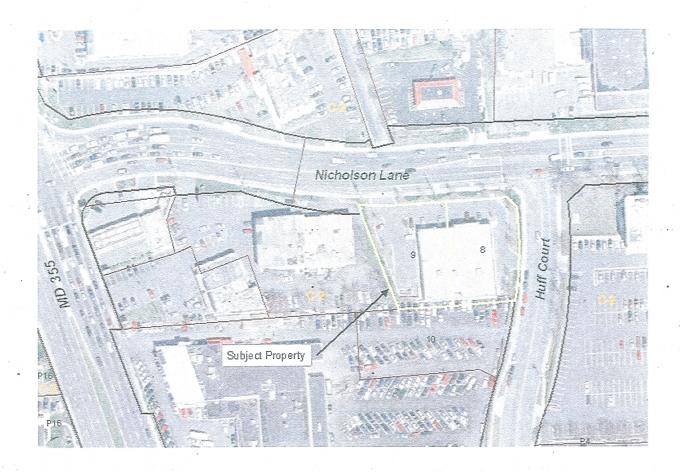
## **RECOMMENDATION:** Approval subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Approval under this preliminary plan is limited to a bank, not to exceed 3,400 square feet in size, with up to three drive-through aisles.
- 2) Access to the site is limited to a right-in/right-out on Nicholson Lane as shown on the preliminary plan.
- 3) Compliance with the conditions of approval of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) stormwater management approval dated July 9, 2007.
- 4) Compliance with conditions of Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) letter dated September 24, 2007, unless otherwise amended.
- 5) Access and improvements as required to be approved by DPWT prior to recordation of plat(s).
- 6) The applicant must dedicate all road rights-of-way shown on the approved preliminary plan to the full width mandated by the Master Plan unless otherwise designated on the preliminary plan.
- 7) The applicant must coordinate with DPWT regarding the site design along the future Citadel Avenue frontage and at the Nicholson Lane/Huff Court/ Citadel Avenue intersection related to DPWT's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Project No. 500310, Citadel Avenue Extended.
- 8) The applicant must install one inverted-U bike rack at a location near the bank's main entrance as agreed upon prior to release of any building permits, by the Transportation Planning staff.
- 9) A landscape and lighting plan must be submitted prior to record plat application for review and approval by technical staff.
- 10) The Adequate Public Facility (APF) review for the preliminary plan will remain valid for sixty-one (61) months from the date of mailing of the Planning Board opinion.
- 11) The record plat must show other necessary easements.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property "Subject Property" or "Property", pictured on the following page and in Attachment A (Vicinity Map), is located at the intersection of Nicholson Lane and Huff Court, 600 feet east of Rockville Pike (MD 355). The White Flint Metro Station is one block north of the Property. The site is located in the *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* area. The Subject Property is zoned C-2 and is surrounded by property also zoned C-2. The Property currently consists of part of Lot 8 and part of Lot 9. These two parts of lots total 0.75 acres in size. A one-story commercial structure is currently located on the Property.

The Property is located in the Rock Creek watershed. There are no streams, wetlands, existing forest or specimen trees on-site.



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to remove the existing structure on the Property and construct a 3,327 square foot bank with three drive-through aisles. The two parts of lots will be combined into one lot. Vehicular access points are proposed from Nicholson Lane and Huff Court. Parking spaces are proposed along the northern, eastern and western boundary lines. The three drive-through aisles are located at the rear of the proposed structure. The applicant proposes to dedicate additional right-of-way at the northeast corner of the property. Sidewalks along Nicholson Lane and Huff Court will be reconstructed by the applicant so that an 8 foot-wide lawn panel buffers pedestrians from vehicular traffic along Nicholson Lane and Huff Court.

(Attachment B – proposed plan)

#### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

## Master Plan Compliance

The North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan, approved and adopted in 1992, confirms that the Subject Property is part of the White Flint Sector Plan area, zoned C-2. More

specifically, the Master Plan recommends that C-2 be the base zone for the Property and the site be included in a TS-M floating zone. In 1993, C-2 was established as the base zone as part of a Sectional Map Amendment. To utilize the floating TS-M zone, the owners of the subject property would need to apply for rezoning. The current application proposes a standard method plan under the existing C-2 zoning.

The major objectives for the White Flint Sector Plan area are listed on page 51 of the Master Plan and include the following:

- 1) Develop White Flint as the main urban center of North Bethesda.
- 2) Capitalize on the public investment in the Metro system and encourage its use rather than continued reliance on the automobile.
- 3) Promote mixed-use development near the Metro station to ensure the 24-hour vitality of the area.
- 4) Include a significant transit serviceable residential component within the Sector plan area.
- 5) Develop policies to ensure a lively pedestrian environment.

The proposed bank use does not provide the level of development envisioned by the Sector Plan for this site using TS-M zoning, but it is a permitted use in the base C-2 zone, and so conforms to the Sector Plan recommendation. As currently configured the preliminary plan layout also does not reflect the urban character that is desired by the Sector Plan, however, the C-2 base zone does not require Section 59-D-3 site plan review, so staff's ability to control site design is limited. Rather than create a typically suburban "island" effect, where the building is surrounded by asphalt, staff would prefer that the bank structure be located at the northeast front corner of the property adjoining the sidewalks fronting Nicholson Lane and Huff Court. Additionally, staff would like the applicant to screen and shade the parking areas, plant street trees, design lighting that does not trespass onto adjacent properties, and coordinate with the forthcoming White Flint streetscape plan for tree species and details in pavement to create an urban environment and improve pedestrian "friendliness".

Staff discussed the desired layout with the applicant, but the applicant does not wish to commit to a building location in the northeast corner of the site because it would necessitate reengineering to connect their stormwater management facility to the storm drain system, and could possibly result in the need to construct retaining walls at the intersection of Nicholson Lane and Huff Court. Although these reasons for adhering to the proposed layout don't seem insurmountable to staff, we acknowledge that site design and building location are not specific requirements of a preliminary plan. Since the Sector Plan recommends a base zone that does not require a site plan review at which design details are established, staff does not find the preliminary plan to be out of compliance with the Sector Plan.

Staff believes that a landscaping and lighting plan should be required to meet a primary objective of the White Flint Sector Plan—a lively pedestrian environment. Condition #10 on page 2 of this report states the applicant must submit a landscape and lighting plan prior to record plat. Such a plan will allow for screening of the parking area, street trees and lighting that will enhance safety.

### Other Public Facilities and Services

Public facilities and services are available and will be adequate to serve the proposed bank. The Property will be served by public sewer and water. The application has been reviewed by the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service who have determined that the Property has appropriate access for fire and rescue vehicles. Other public facilities and services, such as police stations and firehouses, are currently operating within the standards set by the Growth Policy Resolution currently in effect. Gas, electrical and telecommunications services are also available to serve the Property.

## **Transportation**

As aforementioned, the subject bank site is located in the southwest corner of the intersection of Nicholson Lane and Huff Court, with vehicular access points from Nicholson Lane and Huff Court.

## On-Going Transportation Project

Huff Court is part of an on-going transportation project (DPWT CIP Project No. 509337, Citadel Avenue Extended), which has construction funding for a two-lane business district street from its current terminus 600 feet south of Marinelli Road to Nicholson Lane. Construction is anticipated to start in August 2007 and to be completed within a year.

#### Available Transit Service

Ride-On route 38 and Metrobus routes C-8 and J-5 operate along the Nicholson Lane frontage of the site. The White Flint Metrorail Station is located approximately 1,000 feet north of the Subject Property.

#### Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks exist along Nicholson Lane and Huff Court with no lawn/tree panel between the sidewalks and the travelway. The applicant is required to reconstruct these sidewalks along Nicholson Lane and Huff Court so that an 8 foot-wide lawn panel buffers pedestrians from vehicular traffic along Nicholson Lane and Huff Court. The pedestrian crosswalk nearest the site is located along the eastern leg of the intersection. Currently, there are no pedestrian signals at this intersection. Pedestrian crosswalks with handicapped ramps and pedestrian signals are included in the DPWT CIP Project for Citadel Avenue Extended at all intersection legs.

#### Master-Planned Roadways and Bikeway

In accordance with the *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* and the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan*, the nearby master-planned roadways and bikeway facility are designated as follows:

- 1. Nicholson Lane is designated as an undivided, four-lane arterial, A-69, with a recommended 80-foot minimum right-of-way and a shared signed roadway (on-street bike lane), SR-37.
- 2. Huff Court and Citadel Avenue are designated as an undivided, four-lane, business district streets, B-4, with a recommended 60-foot minimum right-of-ways.

## <u>Transportation Demand Management</u>

The proposed bank with three drive-through aisles is located within the boundary of the North Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD). The structure will contain less than 25 employees, therefore, the applicant is not required to enter into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement (TMAg) to participate in the North Bethesda Transportation Management Organization (TMO).

## Local Area Transportation Review (LATR)

The proposed bank generates the following peak-hour trips within the weekday morning peak period (6:30 to 9:30 a.m.) and the evening peak period (4:00 to 7:00 p.m.):

Type of Land Use	Square Feet	Weekday Peak Hour			
		Morning		Evening	
		New	Total	New	Total
Proposed Bank with 3 Drive-Through Windows	3,327 sq. ft.	31	58	81	153
Existing General Retail Store	11,340 sq. ft.	-11	-20	-42	-80
Net Increase in Peak-Hour Trips		+20	+38	+39	+73

Total trips include new, diverted, and pass-by trips. New trips occur when the bank is the primary trip origin or destination. Diverted, and pass-by trips are those where the driver is already on the road but stops at the bank on the way along the travel route.

A traffic study was required to satisfy LATR, because the proposed bank generates at least 30 total peak-hour trips during the weekday morning and evening peak hours. The traffic study submitted by the applicant was based on a 3,560 square foot bank. The table below shows the Critical Lane Volume (CLV) values at the studied intersections:

T. CC. C. IV	Weekday Peak Hour	Traffic Condition			
Traffic Condition		Existing	Background	Total	
Nicholson Lane and Rockville Pike	Morning	1,050	1,119	1,121	
	Evening	1,406	1,604	1,618	
Nicholson Lane and Site Access Point	Morning	632	701	710	
	Evening	721	820	837	
Nicholson Lane and Huff Court/Future Citadel Avenue	Morning	660	985	996	
	Evening	805	1,120	1,150	
Nicholson Lane and Nebel Street/ Nicholson Court	Morning	808	907	911	
	Evening	1,051	1;104	1,109	
Huff Court and Site Access Point	Morning	110	133	148	
	Evening	105	117	143	

The CLV values at all intersections are less than the 1,800 congestion standard for the White Flint (Metrorail Station) Policy Area; and, therefore, satisfy the LATR test. Proposed vehicle and pedestrian access for the subdivision will be safe and adequate with the proposed public improvements.

## **Environment**

The Subject Property does not contain any environmentally sensitive areas or environmental buffers. As a result, the Environmental Guidelines are not applicable. A Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation was submitted for the site, which was approved on January 12, 2007.

There is no forest on the Property. There are, however, five trees on-site and three trees immediately adjacent to the property that are marked to be saved as part of the Tree Save Plan. Four of these trees are approximately 14" in diameter at breast height (DBH) and one is 28" DBH. These trees will be protected with tree protection fencing and other necessary stress reduction measures deemed appropriate in the field.

## **Stormwater Management**

The MCDPS Stormwater Management Section approved the stormwater management concept for the project on July 9, 2007. The concept includes on-site water quality control via a volume-based, proprietary, structural filter (Contech Stormfilter or approved equivalent). On-site recharge is not required since redevelopment is proposed. Channel protection volume is not

required because the one-year post development peak discharge is less than or equal to 2.0 cubic square feet.

## Compliance with the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance

This application has been reviewed for compliance with the Montgomery County Code, Chapter 50, the Subdivision Regulations. The application meets all applicable sections. Access and public facilities will be adequate to support the proposed lots and uses. The proposed lot size, width, shape and orientation are appropriate for the location of the subdivision.

The lot was reviewed for compliance with the dimensional requirements for the C-2 zone as specified in the Zoning Ordinance. The lots as proposed will meet all the dimensional requirements for area, frontage, width, and setbacks in that zone. A summary of this review is included in attached Table 1. The application has been reviewed by other applicable county agencies, all of whom have recommended approval of the plan (see Attachment D for Agency Correspondence).

## Citizen Correspondence and Issues

The applicant notified adjacent and confronting property owners and civic associations of the preliminary plan submission made to MNCPPC and provided copies of the plan, as required. Staff sent notice of the public hearing to these parties. No citizen concerns have been brought to the attention of MNCPPC staff as of the date of this report.

#### CONCLUSION

The proposed lot meets all requirements established in the Subdivision Regulations and the Zoning Ordinance and complies with the recommendations of the *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan*. Access and public facilities will be adequate to serve the proposed lots, and the application has been reviewed by other applicable county agencies, all of whom have recommended approval of the plan. Therefore, approval of the application with the conditions specified above is recommended.

#### Attachments

Attachment A – Vicinity Development Map

Attachment B – Proposed Development Plan

Attachment C – Community Based Planning Memorandum

Attachment D – Agency Correspondence

Table 1: Preliminary Plan Data Table and Checklist

Plan Name: Commerce Bank - Nicholson Lane Plan Number: 120070620 Zoning: C-2 # of Lots: 1 # of Outlots: 0 Dev. Type: Standard Proposed for Verified Date **PLAN DATA Zoning Ordinance** Approval by the Development Standard **Preliminary Plan** 9/25/07 32,223 sq. ft. EG Minimum Lot Area None Lot Width None 160 ft. EG 9/25/07 160 ft. EG 9/25/07 Lot Frontage None Setbacks Must meet minimum<sup>1</sup> 9/25/07 EG 10 ft. Min. Front Must meet minimum<sup>1</sup> EG 9/25/07 No yard may be less Side/Rear than 3 ft. in width 42 ft. Max. May not exceed EG 9/25/07 Height maximum<sup>1</sup> EG 9/25/07 Max Resid'l d.u. or 0.1 FAR 1.5 FAR Comm'l s.f. per Zoning Must meet minimum<sup>1</sup> EG 9/25/07 Green Area 10% of gross tract EG 9/25/07 **TDRs** No MPDUs No EG 9/25/07 Site Plan Reg'd? EG 9/25/07 No **FINDINGS SUBDIVISION** EG 9/25/07 Lot frontage on Public Street Yes Road dedication and frontage improvements Yes Agency letter 9/24/07 Staff memo 9/20/07 N/a **Environmental Guidelines** Staff memo 9/20/07 Exempt **Forest Conservation** Staff memo 9/21/07 Master Plan Compliance No ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES 7/9/07 Yes Stormwater Management Agency letter 4/16/07 Agency Yes Water and Sewer (WSSC) comments Agency 4/16/07 Yes 10-yr Water and Sewer Plan Compliance comments Well and Septic N/a EG 9/25/07 Staff memo 7/19/07 Local Area Traffic Review Yes Agency letter 6/22/07 Fire and Rescue Yes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> As determined by MCDPS at the time of building permit.

## **COMMERCE BANK-NICHOLSON LANE (120070620)**



#### NOTICE

The planimetric, property, and topographic information shown on this map is based on copyrighted Map Products from the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning of the Maryland -National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and may not be copied or reproduced without written permission from M-NCPPC.

Property lines are compiled by adjusting the property lines to topography created from aerial photography and should not be interpreted as actual field surveys. Planimetric features were compiled from 1:14400 scale aerial photography using stereo photogrammetric methods. This map is created from a variety of data sources, and may not reflect the most current conditions in any one location and may not be completely accurate or up to date. All map features are approximately within five feet of their true location. This map may not be the same as a map of the same area plotted at an earlier time as the data is continuously updated. Use of this map, other than for general planning purposes is not recommended. - Copyright 1998



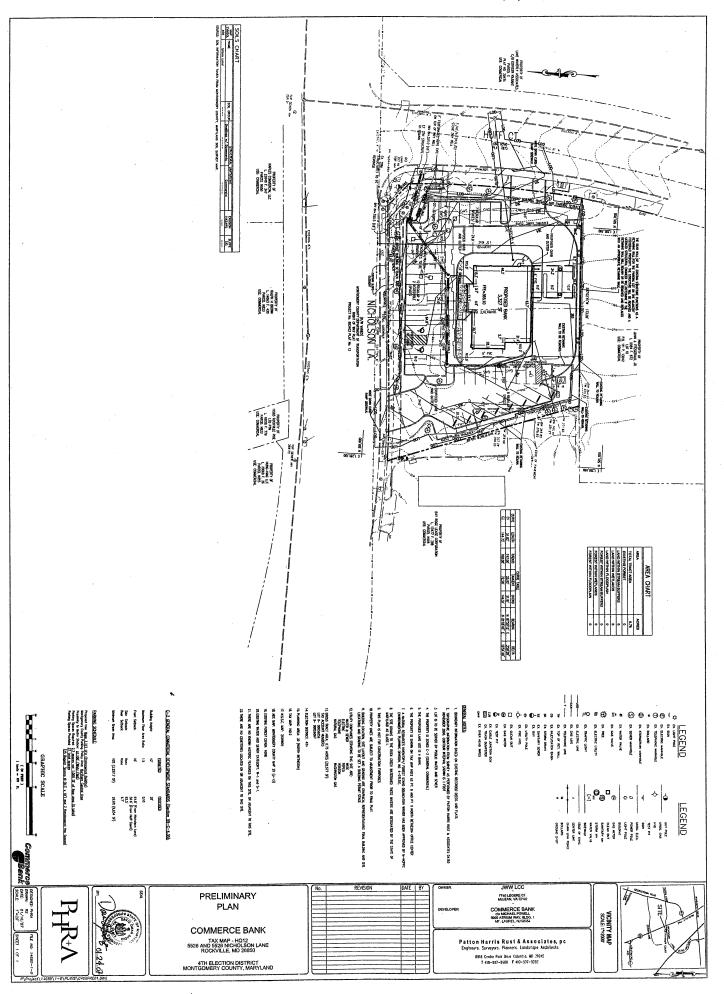




MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 2091 0-3760





September 21, 2007

#### MEMORANDUM

TO:

Cathy Conlon, Development Review Division

FROM:

Judy Daniel, Team

Bethesda-Chevy Chase.

Bethesda Team

SUBJECT:

Community-Based Planning Comments for Preliminary Plan

No. 1-20070620: Commerce Bank - Nicholson Lane

ZONE:

C-2

MASTER PLAN:

1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan

White Flint Sector Plan

## **Staff Recommendation**

To meet Master Plan major objectives, change the location of the bank building on the site to sit at the corner of Nicholson Lane at Huff Court. Locate parking to the side and rear of the site.

## **Background**

The site is located in 1992 North Bethesda-Garrett Master Plan in Sub-Area 7 of the White Flint Sector Plan area. The site is bounded by Nicholson Lane and Huff Court and is located one block south of the White Flint Metro Station. This proposal is for a onestory bank building with a drive-through surrounded by associated parking on a .75 acre site. The site currently contains a one story commercial building that is to be replaced.

#### **Master Plan Guidance**

The Master Plan confirms the C-2 zoning, although the site is recommended for TS-M zoning. The developers have chosen to develop under the C-2 Zone. The primary stated major objectives of the Master Plan for this area are:

- 1. Develop White Flint as the main urban center of North Bethesda.
- 2. Capitalize on the public investment in the Metro system and encourage its use rather than continued reliance on the automobile.

- 3. Promote mixed-use development near the Metro station to ensure the 24-hour vitality of the area.
- 4. Include a significant transit serviceable residential component within the Sector Plan area.
- 5. Develop policies to ensure a lively pedestrian environment.

Further, in the "Green Corridors" section of the Environmental Resources chapter, the Master Plan recommends maintaining and enhancing vegetation along roadsides and in medians of major highway corridors. The design guidelines include; "placing a landscape buffer between the curb and relocated sidewalks, placing trees in medians and along curbs, screening of front yard parking, and relocating utility poles to allow for optimum tree planting and sidewalks". (p. 251.)

## Compatibility

Three sides of the project are bounded by non-residential commercial properties. Surrounding uses include a portion of a car dealership parking lot, a gas station, a fast food restaurant, and another commercial building. The mixed-use, residential high-rise "White Flint View" building, a rezoning recently recommended for approval by the Planning Board, is proposed to the north (across Nicholson Lane) on the Nolan Plumbing site. The nature of the proposed use here is compatible with the existing uses.

#### Recommendation

The proposed layout of this site is very suburban in character, and contrary to the urban character envisioned for this area by the Master Plan. The proposal locates the building in the middle of the lot, surrounded by parking. This creates a land use pattern wholly out of character with the urban vision in the Master Plan.

The staff finds that the proposed plan complies with the 1992 Master Plan in terms of zoning, but the placement of the building on the lot is not in the character or spirit of the Master Plan intent. The submitted configuration creates a typically suburban "island" effect, surrounded by asphalt.

In order to comply with the Master Plan intent, the bank structure should be located at the northeast front corner of the property, adjoining the sidewalks fronting Nicholson Lane and Huff Court. The drive through would still parallel the Huff Court access. The recommended change in the location of the building would make the development less in conflict with the current Master Plan intent, although the one-story single use structure is not the use of the property envisioned in the Master Plan. The update to the White Flint Sector Plan currently underway is considering even stronger tools to build a mixed-use, pedestrian oriented area.

To improve meet Master Plan objectives for sites that are within walking distance of the Metro station, including creating an urban environment and improving the pedestrian "friendliness" of this proposal, the following is recommended:

- 1. Move the building to the northeast corner of the property, placing the majority of the parking behind and to the rear of the bank structure. Provide entrances from Nicholson Lane (for pedestrians) and the parking area.
- 2. Screen and shade the parking areas.
- 3. Relocate the sidewalk along Nicholson Lane and Huff Court. Per Master Plan guidance, street trees should be located 30' on center in a 6-foot grass panel.
- 4. Design lighting so that it does not trespass onto adjacent properties.
- 5. Coordinate with the forthcoming White Flint streetscape (under design) for tree species and details in pavement.



## FIRE MARSHAL COMMENTS

DATE:

JUNE 22, 2007

TO:

SCOTT STROUP, PATTON HARRIS RUST & ASSOCIATES

FROM:

MARIE LABAW

RE:

COMMERCE BANK, NICHOLSEN LANE 1-20070620

## PLAN APPROVED.

- 1. Review based only upon information contained on the plan submitted <u>06-22-07</u>. Review and approval does not cover unsatisfactory installation resulting from errors, omissions, or failure to clearly indicate conditions on this plan.
- 2. Correction of unsatisfactory installation will be required upon inspection and service of notice of violation to a party responsible for the property.

Department of Permitting Services

MNCPPC-MC

cc:



## DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES

Isiah Leggett

County Executive

July 9, 2007

Carla Reid Joyner
Director

Ms. Christina Contreras Patton Harris Rust & Associates 12850 Middlebrook Road, Suite 200 Germantown, MD 20874

Re:

Stormwater Management CONCEPT Request

for Commerce Bank Nicholson Lane Preliminary Plan #: 120070620

SM File #: 230491

Tract Size/Zone: 0.75 Ac./C-2 Total Concept Area: 0.75 Ac. Lots/Block: Part of 8 & 9 /A

Parcel(s):

Watershed: Lower Rock Creek

Dear Ms. Contreras:

Based on a review by the Department of Permitting Services Review Staff, the stormwater management concept for the above mentioned site is **acceptable**. The stormwater management concept consists of on-site water quality control via a volume-based, proprietary, structural filter (Contech Stormfilter or approved equivalent). Onsite recharge is not required since this is redevelopment. Channel protection volume is not required because the one-year post development peak discharge is less than or equal to 2.0 cfs.

The following **items** will need to be addressed **during** the detailed sediment control/stormwater management plan stage:

- 1. Prior to permanent vegetative stabilization, all disturbed areas must be topsoiled per the latest Montgomery County Standards and Specifications for Topsoiling.
- 2. A detailed review of the stormwater management computations will occur at the time of detailed plan review.
- 3. An engineered sediment control plan must be submitted for this development.
- 4. All filtration media for manufactured best management practices, whether for new development or redevelopment, must consist of MDE approved material.
- 5. A VortSentry (Model VS-40) hydrodynamic structure will be used for pretreatment of the StormFilter.
- 6. Pipes in and out of the StormFilter box must be at right angles. A rubber boot must be installed when using any type of pipe other than RCP.

This list may not be all-inclusive and may change based on available information at the time.

Payment of a stormwater management contribution in accordance with Section 2 of the Stormwater Management Regulation 4-90 is not required.

This letter must appear on the sediment control/stormwater management plan at its initial submittal. The concept approval is based on all stormwater management structures being located outside of the Public Utility Easement, the Public Improvement Easement, and the Public Right of Way unless specifically approved on the concept plan. Any divergence from the information provided to this office; or additional information received during the development process; or a change in an applicable Executive Regulation may constitute grounds to rescind or amend any approval actions taken, and to reevaluate the site for additional or amended stormwater management requirements. If there are subsequent additions or modifications to the development, a separate concept request shall be required.

If you have any questions regarding these actions, please feel free to contact David Kuykendall at 240-777-6332.

Sincerell

Richard R. Brush, Manager Water Resources Section

Division of Land Development Services

RRB:dm CN230491 Commerce Bank Nicholson lane.DWK

CC:

C. Conlon

S. Federline

SM File # 230491

QN -Onsite;

Acres: 0.75

QL - Onsite;

Acres: 0.69

Recharge is not provided



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION

Isiah Leggett County Executive

Arthur Holmes, Jr. Director

September 24, 2007

Ms. Catherine Conlon, Subdivision Supervisor Development Review Division The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission 8787 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

RE:

Preliminary Plan #1-20070620

Commerce Bank - Nicholson Lane

Dear Ms. Conlon:

We have completed our review of the preliminary plan revised on 09/20/07. This plan was reviewed by the Development Review Committee at its meeting on 04/16/07. We recommend approval of the plan subject to the following comments:

All Planning Board Opinions relating to this plan or any subsequent revision, project plans or site plans should be submitted to DPS in the package for record plats, storm drain, grading or paving plans, or application for access permit. Include this letter and all other correspondence from this department.

- Necessary dedication for Nicholson Lane and Huff Court in accordance with the Master Plan and 1. standard truncation at the intersection of the aforementioned streets.
- 2. Grant necessary slope and drainage easements. Slope easements are to be determined by study or set at the building restriction line.
- 3. The sight distances study has been accepted. A copy of the accepted Sight Distances Evaluation certification form is enclosed for your information and reference.
- A Public Improvements Easement may be necessary along the site frontage, in order to 4. accommodate the required sidewalk construction. Prior to submission of the record plat, the applicant's consultant will need to determine if there is sufficient right of way to permit this sidewalk construction. If not, the applicant will need to either dedicate additional right of way or execute a Declaration of Public Improvements Easement document. That document is to be recorded in the Land Records of Montgomery County, with the liber and folio referenced on the record plat. Unless otherwise noted, the Public Improvements Easement is to be a minimum width of ten (10) feet with the overlapping Public Utilities Easement being no less than twenty (20) feet wide.

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- In accordance with Section 49-35(e) of the Montgomery County Code, sidewalks are required to serve the proposed subdivision. Sidewalks are to be reconstructed along the site frontage according to the associated DPWT standard street sections unless the applicant is able to obtain a waiver from the appropriate government agency. Also the proposed sidewalk should be connected to the existing sidewalk on Nicholson lane.
- 6. The parking layout plan will be reviewed by the Department of Permitting Services at the site plan or building permit stage, whichever comes first. To facilitate their review, that plan should delineate and dimension the proposed on-site travel lanes, parking spaces, curb radii, handicap parking spaces and access facilities, and sidewalks. The applicant may wish to contact Ms. Sarah Navid of that Department at (240) 777-6320 to discuss the parking lot design.
- 7. Curb radii for intersection type driveways should be sufficient to accommodate the turning movements of the largest vehicle expected to frequent the site. However Driveways curb returns should not encroach adjacent properties frontages. Also provide proper spacing between the driveways curb returns and public utilities features.
- 8. In order to ensure adequate driveway capacity, particularly egress volume, we recommend providing a minimum fifty (50) foot tangent section before encountering cross traffic on-site, for all driveways.
- 9. The parking lot travel lanes are to be designed to allow a WB-50 truck to circulate without crossing the centerline nor the curbline.
- 10. The applicant needs to submit a truck circulation plan for review by the M-NCPPC and MCDPS. This plan should delineate the proposed movements on-site between the anticipated access locations, the proposed truck loading spaces, and the proposed dumpsters. The truck circulation pattern and loading position should be designed for counter-clockwise entry and for a left-side backing maneuver. Passenger vehicle travel ways should be separated from the expected truck patterns and storage areas. The applicant may also need to provide documentation of their proposed delivery schedules. Also coordinate with David Wagaman at 240-777-6400 Division of Solid Waste about their requirements for recycle/trash truck access and movement.
- 11. On the site plan, delineate the location and dimensions of the proposed truck loading and/or dumpster spaces.
- 12. Provide on-site handicap access facilities, parking spaces, ramps, etc. in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.
- Where perpendicular parking spaces border a sidewalk, a two (2) foot vehicle overhang is assumed. The applicant should either provide a seven (7) foot wide sidewalk or wheelstops within those parking spaces.
- 14. The owner will be required to submit a recorded covenant for the operation and maintenance of private streets, storm drain systems, and/or open space areas prior to MCDPS approval of the record plat. The deed reference for this document is to be provided on the record plat.

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- 15. Geometrics for the intersection of proposed driveways with Nicholson Lane and Huff Court will be reviewed by the Department of Permitting Services as part of their review of the building permit application. Included in that review will be the design of any necessary left turn storage lanes and/or acceleration/deceleration lanes. We advise the applicant to submit their traffic volume data to the DPS Right-of-Way Permitting and Plan Review Section (in advance of their building permit applications) to verify their intersection improvement requirements and the acceptability of their design.

  Also please note, that we will monitor traffic movements along Nicholson Ave and Huff Court. If problems are detected, we may need to limit certain movements into and/or out of the driveways, to improve traffic operations and safety.
- 16. Relocation of utilities along existing roads to accommodate the required roadway improvements shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
- 17. If the proposed development will alter any existing street lights, signing, and/or pavement markings, please contact Mr. Fred Lees of our Traffic Control and Lighting Engineering Team at (240) 777-6000 for proper executing procedures. All costs associated with such relocations shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
- 18. If the proposed development will alter or impact any existing County maintained transportation system management component (i.e., traffic signals, signal poles, handboxes, surveillance cameras, etc.) or communication component (i.e., traffic signal interconnect, fiber optic lines, etc.), please contact Mr. Bruce Mangum of our Traffic Management Team at (240) 777-6000 for proper executing procedures. All costs associated with such relocations shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
- 19. Trees in the County rights of way species and spacing to be in accordance with the applicable DPWT standards. A tree planting permit is required from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, State Forester's Office [(301) 854-6060], to plant trees within the public right of way.
- 20. Please coordinate with Department of Fire and Rescue about their requirements for emergency vehicle access.
- 21. Provide driveway access for the stormwater management facilities per associated DPS guidelines.
- 22. Permit and bond will be required as a prerequisite to DPS approval of the record plat. The permit will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following improvements:
- A. Reconstruct the sidewalk along the site frontage as per items 4 and 5 above.
- B. Additional road improvements may be required as a result of a review of a traffic study if such study is required by the Planning Board staff.
- C. Improvements to the existing public storm drainage system as proposed on the preliminary plan. At the permit stage the applicant will coordinate with DPWT Division of Capital Development to seek DPWT participation in those improvements. If the participation deemed not possible, the applicant solely will bear the responsibility to perform above improvements in accordance with the DPWT Storm Drain Design Criteria.

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- D. Permanent monuments and property line markers, as required by Section 50-24(e) of the Subdivision Regulations.
- E. Erosion and sediment control measures as required by Section 50-35(j) and on-site stormwater management where applicable shall be provided by the Developer (at no cost to the County) at such locations deemed necessary by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) and will comply with their specifications. Erosion and sediment control measures are to be built prior to construction of streets, houses and/or site grading and are to remain in operation (including maintenance) as long as deemed necessary by the DPS.
- F. Developer shall provide street lights in accordance with the specifications, requirements, and standards prescribed by the Traffic Engineering and Operations Section.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this preliminary plan. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact me at <a href="mailto:sam.farhadi@montgomerycountymd.gov">sam.farhadi@montgomerycountymd.gov</a> or (240) 777-6000.

Sincerely,

Sam Farhadi, P.E.

Development Review Group Traffic Engineering and Operations Section Division of Operations

m:/subdivision/farhas01/preliminary plans/ 1-20070620, Commerce Bunk-Nicholson Lane.doc

#### Enclosures (2)

cc: Michael Powell, Commerce Bank
Chritina Contreras, PHR&A
Jody Kline, Miller, Miller & Canby
Joseph Y. Cheung; DPS RWPPR
Sarah Navid; DPS RWPPR
Henry Emery; DPS RWPPR
Shahriar Etemadi; M-NCPPC TP
Gregory Leck, DPWT TEOS
Preliminary Plan Folder
Preliminary Plans Note Book

LAW OFFICES

## MILLER, MILLER & CANBY

CHARTERED

200-B MONROE STREET ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

(301) 762-5212 FAX (301) 762-6044

SLCHO@MMCANBY.COM

February 1, 2008

PATRICK C. MCKEEVER JAMES L. THOMPSON LEWIS R. SCHUMANN JODY S. KLINE ELLEN S. WALKER MAURY S. EPNER JOSEPH P. SUNTUM SUSAN W. CARTER ROBERT E. GOUGH DONNA E. McBRIDE GLENN M. ANDERSON\* MICHAEL G. CAMPBELL SOO LEE-CHO AMY C.H. GRASSO CHRISTINE E. BUCKLEY \*Licensed in Maryland and Florida

Ms. Erin Grayson
Development Review Division
M-NCPPC
.
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

RE:

Preliminary Plan Application No. 120070620

Commerce Bank - Nicholson Lane

#### Dear Erin:

Following the Planning Board's October 18, 2007 hearing, at which time action on the above referenced preliminary plan application was deferred, we reported back to our client, Commerce Bank, the concerns raised by members of the Planning Board relative to the design of the proposed branch bank facility.

Commerce Bank has attempted to address the Planning Board's issues by spending the last several months evaluating different site layouts including, among other ideas, determining whether moving the bank facility closer to the street would be both technically feasible and operationally functional for the bank, and if so, at what cost. Unfortunately, Commerce has concluded that constructing a building that would be located closer to the public right-of-way would subject the Bank to substantial additional cost and operational constraints and would do little to enhance the pedestrian environment. More effective pedestrian amenities are available. Therefore, Commerce Bank requests that its preliminary plan be scheduled for re-presentation to the Planning Board for the Board to consider these following comments in more detail.

First of all, we find it necessary to reiterate that we do not believe that the Subdivision Regulations, nor the preliminary plan review process, allow the Planning Board to dictate where a building must be located on a parcel of land. Section 50-35(l) does not bestow, in effect, site plan review authority on the Planning Board simply because the North Bethesda / Garrett Park Master Plan contains general language encouraging "pedestrian-friendly streets". (Master Plan, p. 139).

Second, the request of the Community Based Planning Division to re-locate the building will impose substantial new construction costs, compromise the bank branch's operations, and do little if anything to serve the Master Plan vision.

Studies provided by the Applicant's traffic engineers show that during the AM and PM peak there is only modest pedestrian traffic. A total of twelve (12) pedestrians crossed the site access points during the AM peak and thirteen (13) pedestrians crossed the site access points during the PM peak hour. At the corner of Nicholson Lane/Huff Court, the total pedestrians observed was only 22 pedestrians during the AM peak hour and 45 pedestrians during the PM peak hour. For comparison, at the intersection of Rockville Pike/Nicholson Lane a total of 79 pedestrians were observed during the AM peak hour and 142 pedestrians were observed during the PM peak hour. This data is consistent with the nature of the stores in the surrounding area and the commuting patterns of workers and visitors to the area. Surrounding area shops are "destination retail" locations and there are few restaurants or activity centers that people walk to.

Notwithstanding the lack of pedestrian movement past its property, Commerce fully supports creating a pedestrian-friendly realm and believes that it can, through good design, improve pedestrian accessibility to and past its property. It just doesn't believe that relocation of the bank building to the front of the site is the <u>only</u> acceptable technique for creating an attractive and functional adjacent pedestrian environment. In its Report dated September 25, 2007, the Development Review Division Staff recommended preliminary plan approval with a condition that

"9. A landscape and lighting plan must be submitted prior to record plat application for review and approval by technical staff."

That condition remains acceptable to the Applicant today. The landscaping plan could include such "pedestrian friendly" features as an attractive staircase from the public sidewalk to the higher level of the bank pad and/or special sidewalk treatment within the Commerce site to move pedestrians safely and efficiently to the front of the bank, additional trees, plantings and/or benches. There are a number of ways that the bank would be willing to improve the "pedestrian experience" in front of its property short of re-siting the building.

"Pulling the bank building forward" has two negative effects. Commerce Bank will be the only structure for blocks on either side where the building is "tight" against the sidewalk. A single building does not a "street wall" make! Moreover, surrounding buildings will not be modified in the foreseeable future because there is no incentive to redevelop at this time. Those property owners will all wait until the White Flint Sector Plan has been adopted when redevelopment under a new set of rules will be encouraged. That's when the "pedestrian-friendly" environment of North Bethesda will begin to be achieved! By that time the Commerce Bank property itself will be ripe for redevelopment in accordance with all the urbanist planning principles that are unlikely to be achieved in the short or near-term period.

Furthermore, relocation of the bank building subjects Commerce to a number of more expensive engineering and design challenges:

## 1. <u>Stormwater Management Facilities, Water and Sanitary Sewer Connections</u>

The relocation of the bank to the northeastern corner, which is the "natural" low point of the site, would require placement of the stormwater facilities at the southern (uphill) side of the site. This change results in modification of the natural flows of storm and sanitary sewers with the result that the bank will have to connect to an existing sanitary sewer located on the northern side of Nicholson Lane. Connecting to this main line north of Nicholson Lane will require the disturbance of five lanes of vehicular traffic during construction, a significant additional cost.

The bank estimates that the cost differential associated with the relocation of the bank closer to Nicholson Lane would result in an increase of approximately \$150,000.00 (at a minimum) in additional stormwater management, water and sanitary sewer costs alone.

## 2. <u>Grading/Retaining Wall</u>

Moving the building to be flush with the sidewalk involves substantial re-grading of the site. To place the building "at grade" with the sidewalk would result in significant land disturbance expense as well as installation of a retaining wall along the southern boundary of the site of more than 8 feet in height.

In summary, the bank estimates that the total cost differential associated with relocating the bank closer to Nicholson Lane (factoring in the additional SWM, water, sanitary sewer, and grading requirements) would result in approximately a 60% increase in the original site construction budget, and adds several hundreds of thousands of dollars to the construction budget.

Finally, we would note that there exists along the Nicholson Lane frontage, three (3) interconnected major electric, telephone, and cable TV transmission poles that support a major grid north and south on Nicholson Lane. (See attached photo images). Careful consideration will have to be taken when working in and around these poles and their associated lines, which will complicate construction of the bank closer to the street. Additionally, from an aesthetics point of view, having the bank building up against these various overhead utility lines would not be desirable or attractive.

In summary, Commerce believes that moving the bank building to abut the sidewalk
(a) impairs the operation of the bank given its anticipated client mode of arrival; (b) imposes a
burdensome expense on the Applicant; (c) supposedly enhances the sidewalk environment for an
audience that doesn't exist now or in the foreseeable future; and (d) is overreaching when there are other
more cost effective ways of addressing pedestrian accessibility to the bank.

Under separate cover, we will submit to you a more detailed analysis and explanation about why we believe that Section 50-35 (l) of the County Code does not empower the Planning Board to mandate relocation of the proposed bank building.

For the above reasons, Commerce Bank requests that Preliminary Plan Application No. 120070620 be scheduled for review again by the Planning Board at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

MILLER, MILLER & CANBY

JOBY KLINE

Jody S. Kline

Soo Lee-Cho

cc: Cathy Conlon Judy Daniel

Jason LaVeglia

Michael Powell

Patricia Monday

Paul Sun

Christina Contreras









February 11, 2008

#### **MEMORANDUM**

TO:

Cathy Conlon, Development Review Division

FROM:

Judy Daniel, Team Leader, Bethesda-Chevy Chase, North

Bethesda Team

SUBJECT:

Community-Based Planning Comments for Preliminary Plan

No. 1-20070620: Commerce Bank - Nicholson Lane

**ZONE:** 

C-2

**MASTER PLAN:** 

1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan

White Flint Sector Plan

#### **Staff Recommendation**

To meet Master Plan major objectives, the bank building should be located on the site at the corner of Nicholson Lane at Huff Court with parking areas and the drive-through located to the side and rear of the site.

## **Background**

The subject site is located in 1992 North Bethesda-Garrett Master Plan in Sub-Area 7 of the White Flint Sector Plan area. The site is bounded by Nicholson Lane and Huff Court, south of the White Flint Metro Station. This proposal is for a one-story bank building with a drive-through surrounded by associated parking on a .75 acre site. The site currently contains a one story commercial building with associated surface parking that is to be replaced.

#### **Master Plan Guidance**

The Master Plan confirms the C-2 zoning, although the site is recommended for TS-M zoning. The developers have chosen to develop under the C-2 Zone. The primary stated major objectives of the Master Plan for this area are:

- 1. Develop White Flint as the main urban center of North Bethesda.
- 2. Capitalize on the public investment in the Metro system and encourage its use rather than continued reliance on the automobile.

- 3. Promote mixed-use development near the Metro station to ensure the 24-hour vitality of the area.
- 4. Include a significant transit serviceable residential component within the Sector Plan area.
- 5. Develop policies to ensure a lively pedestrian environment.

Further, in the "Green Corridors" section of the Environmental Resources chapter, the Master Plan recommends maintaining and enhancing vegetation along roadsides and in medians of major highway corridors. The design guidelines include; "placing a landscape buffer between the curb and relocated sidewalks, placing trees in medians and along curbs, screening of front yard parking, and relocating utility poles to allow for optimum tree planting and sidewalks". (p. 251)

## Compatibility

The project adjoins commercial properties including a portion of a car dealership parking lot, a gas station, a fast food restaurant, and another commercial building. On the confronting property across Nicholson Lane, a mixed-use, residential high-rise ("White Flint View") has been recently recommended for approval. The type of use proposed use here is compatible with the existing uses.

The proposed layout of the site is not compatible with the Sector Plan goals for the area.

#### Recommendation

The proposal locates the building in the middle of the lot, surrounded by parking. This creates a land use pattern wholly out of character with the urban vision for White Flint. The proposed plan complies with the 1992 Master Plan zoning, but the placement of the building on the lot is not in the character or spirit of the Sector Plan intent. The submitted configuration creates the typically suburban "island" pattern of a building surrounded by asphalt with accessibility by pedestrians as an afterthought.

The bank structure should be located at the northeast front corner of the property, adjoining the sidewalks fronting Nicholson Lane and Huff Court, with the drive-through still located at the rear of the site. The recommended change would reduce conflict with the current Master Plan intent, although the one-story single use structure is not that envisioned in the Master Plan. The update to the White Flint Sector Plan currently underway is considering even stronger tools to build a higher-density mixed-use, pedestrian oriented area.

To reflect Master Plan objectives for sites that are within walking distance of the Metro station, including creating an urban environment and improving the pedestrian "friendliness" of this proposal, the following is recommended:

1. Move the building to the northeast corner of the property, placing the majority of the parking behind and to the rear of the bank structure. Provide entrances from Nicholson Lane (for pedestrians) and the parking area.

- 2. Screen and shade the parking areas.
- 3. Relocate the sidewalk along Nicholson Lane and Huff Court. Per Master Plan guidance, street trees should be located 30' on center in a 6-foot grass panel.
- 4. Design lighting so that it does not trespass onto adjacent properties.
- 5. Coordinate with the forthcoming White Flint streetscape (under design) for tree species and details in pavement.