



May 21, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John Carter, Chief *JC*
Urban Design Division

FROM: John Marcolin, RLA, ASLA, Planner Coordinator (301/495-4547) *JM*
Silver Spring Team, Design Division

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 09713-MCDOT-1: New Underground Parking Garage, between Thayer Avenue and Silver Spring Avenue, to replace Montgomery County Parking Lot 3 Fenton Village, Silver Spring, MD 20910, CBD-1 Zone, 2000 East Silver Spring Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL with the following comments:

1. Finalize abandonment of existing alleys before preliminary plan submittal.
2. Provide security on site during operating hours of the new garage.
3. Retain the existing 152 public parking spaces and provide shared parking for the additional private spaces in the future private underground garage.
4. Improve pedestrian access to the proposed parking garage by providing another pedestrian stairway along the eastern side of the garage near the pedestrian access to Fenton Street.
5. Provide a phasing plan that provides temporary parking for those businesses that presently use Parking Lot 3.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation proposes to construct a below grade public parking structure to replace the existing Public Parking Lot 3, located in the Fenton Village section of the Silver Spring CBD. This public parking garage will be constructed through a joint public/private partnership between the County and Michael, L.L.C. After a public solicitation process the County and Developer executed a General Development Agreement (GDA) for the construction of the garage as well as private development of the rest of the property. The private development will be called Studio Plaza, and it will be comprised of residential and commercial uses, public amenity spaces and a north-south street providing

vehicular and pedestrian access between Thayer Avenue and Silver Spring Avenue. The development will also provide east-west pedestrian access between Georgia Avenue (via Mayor's Lane) and Fenton Street.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Parking Lot 3 is located in the interior of a block in the Fenton Village section of the Silver Spring CBD. This block is bounded on the west by Mayor's Lane, on the East by Fenton Street, on the north by Thayer Avenue and on the south by Silver Spring Avenue. The land on which the parking lot is located was donated to Montgomery County in 1948 by the various landowners to provide parking for theirs and other businesses in Fenton Village. The County provided alleys within the new parking lot to provide access to the rear of the businesses that donated land.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The site is approximately 80,180 s.f. or 1.84 acres in size. The site is zoned CBD-1, and is located within the Fenton Village Overlay zone. (Attachment 1). Montgomery County proposes to transfer the property to Michael L.L.C. in exchange for a condominium space in a three level parking garage, on site, that contains the same number of parking spots (152 spaces) as originally contained in Parking Lot 3. They also propose to abandon existing alleys while preserving parts of three alleys to maintain access to existing businesses as well a pedestrian access to the future mixed use project. The parking garage, which will be built underground, will be located partly under the western half of existing Parking Lot 3, and partly under private land owned by Michael L.L.C. to the south. The proposed underground parking garage will be accessed by a proposed private street running north-south on which the county will have a permanent easement.

ANALYSIS

Master Plan

Montgomery Parking Lot 3 is located in the approved and adopted Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan, dated February 2000. The sector plan calls for new housing in Fenton Village (pg. 61), and it specifically designated Parking Lot 3 as a site for proposed housing and a pedestrian link from the Parking Lot 3 site north to Wayne Avenue (pg.65).

Zoning Analysis

Montgomery County Lot 3 is located on a site zoned CBD-1. The proposed underground parking garage will satisfy the requirements for the CBD-1 zone.

Urban Design

The sale of the Parking Lot 3 requires the abandonment of parts of the existing alleys that provide access to the rear of businesses. The county has proposed adequate new access for those businesses that use the existing alleys proposed for abandonment.

This project proposes transferring 152 public parking spaces on a surface lot located within the center of the block to an underground parking facility. The proposed underground parking facility presents four major concerns:

1. **Safety:** The new underground parking garage will not have direct visual contact (eyes on the street) or direct pedestrian access from the surrounding buildings. On-site security during operating hours of the new garage would address pedestrian safety.
2. **Parking Capacity:** The proposed Studio Plaza mixed use development will bring several more retail establishments that will be served by the same number of parking spots that presently serve the existing businesses. Provide shared parking with the future private development.
3. **Access:** The proposed garage includes two entrances from the proposed green space. Provide another access for pedestrians along the eastern side of the garage near the proposed pedestrian access to Fenton Street.
4. **Parking availability during construction:** The existing businesses that rely on Parking Lot 3 will not have access to that parking during construction of Studio Plaza. Provide a detailed phasing plan that provides adequate parking for these businesses during construction.

Environmental Analysis

Environmental Planning staff recommends approval of MR No. 2009713-MCDOT-1.

A Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Conservation Plan (NRI/FSD), # 42006358, was recertified on November 25, 2008. There are no regulated environmental features on-site such as streams, wetlands, floodplain and their associated environmental buffers.

The site's preliminary forest conservation plan (PFCP) was reviewed and approved by the Planning Board as part of Project Plan #920070010 that is undergoing concurrent development review. Environmental Planning staff recommended approval of the PFCP in Project Plan #920070010 subject to conditions found in the March 30, 2009 memo.

Master Plan Roadways

The proposed garage provides for the roadways required in the Sector Plan. Per the master plan of roadways (pg 110, February 2000 Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan), Silver Spring Avenue has a recommended ROW of 70', Thayer Avenue has a recommended ROW of 60', Fenton Street has a ROW of 80' and Georgia Avenue as a ROW of 140'.

Transportation Review

Transportation Planning staff has no transportation-related conditions for this mandatory referral since the proposed underground parking garage would simply replace existing 152 surface parking spaces on County's Public Parking Lot 3 with the same number of parking spaces within the garage. Therefore the Public Garage itself will not generate additional vehicle trips.

All intersections in the vicinity of the public garage will operate at acceptable levels of service as defined by the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. This applies both to the public garage and the Studio Plaza project.

Historic Preservation

No historic resources listed in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation or the Locational Atlas and Inventory of Historic Sites are located within the bounds of the above referenced Mandatory Referral. No HPC review is required.

The Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department (36/52-1A), at 8131 Georgia Avenue, is listed in the Locational Atlas. This historic resource is adjacent to the subject property. The Historic Preservation section recognizes that the urban context in which the proposed development and the historic resource are located supports a variety of density, design vocabulary, and use. The Historic Preservation section has no specific concerns over the above referenced project, but recommends that the presence of the adjacent historic resource be given appropriate consideration during site plan review.

Community Notification

The applicant has conducted several public meetings regarding the proposed Studio Plaza project. To date, the following meetings have been held.

1. East Silver Spring Citizens' Association: November 17th 2008
2. Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors: November 18, 2008
3. Pre-submission Public Meeting: November 18, 2008
4. Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board Commercial Economic Development Committee: November 19, 2008
5. Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee: December 18th 2008

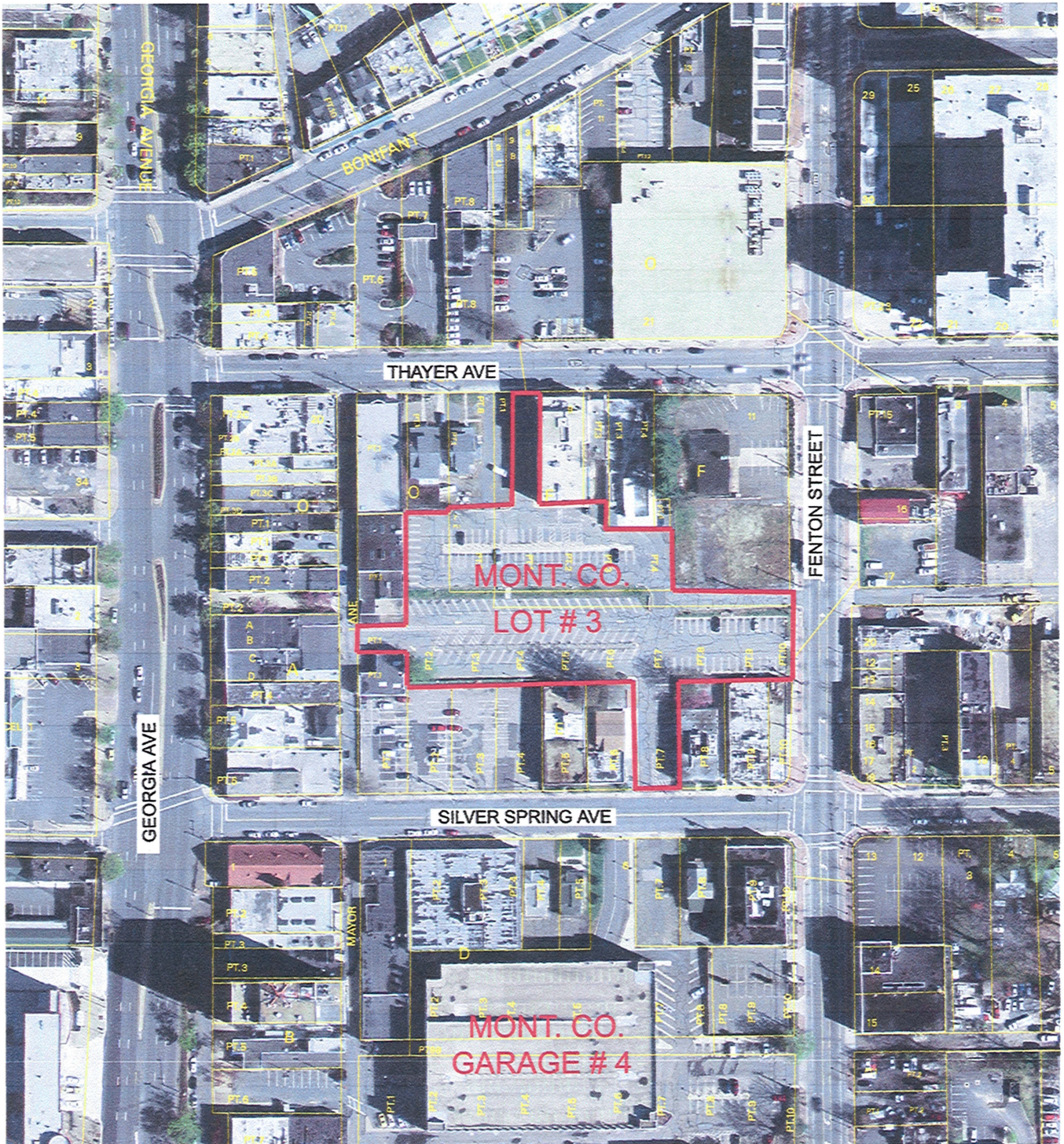
CONCLUSION

Based on information provided by Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the analysis contained in this report, staff concludes that the mandatory referral meets the applicable standards and guidelines for the environment, the applicable guidelines for adequate public facilities as well the development standards for the CBD-1 zone. Staff recommends approval of the mandatory referral with comments listed at the front of this report.

Attachments:

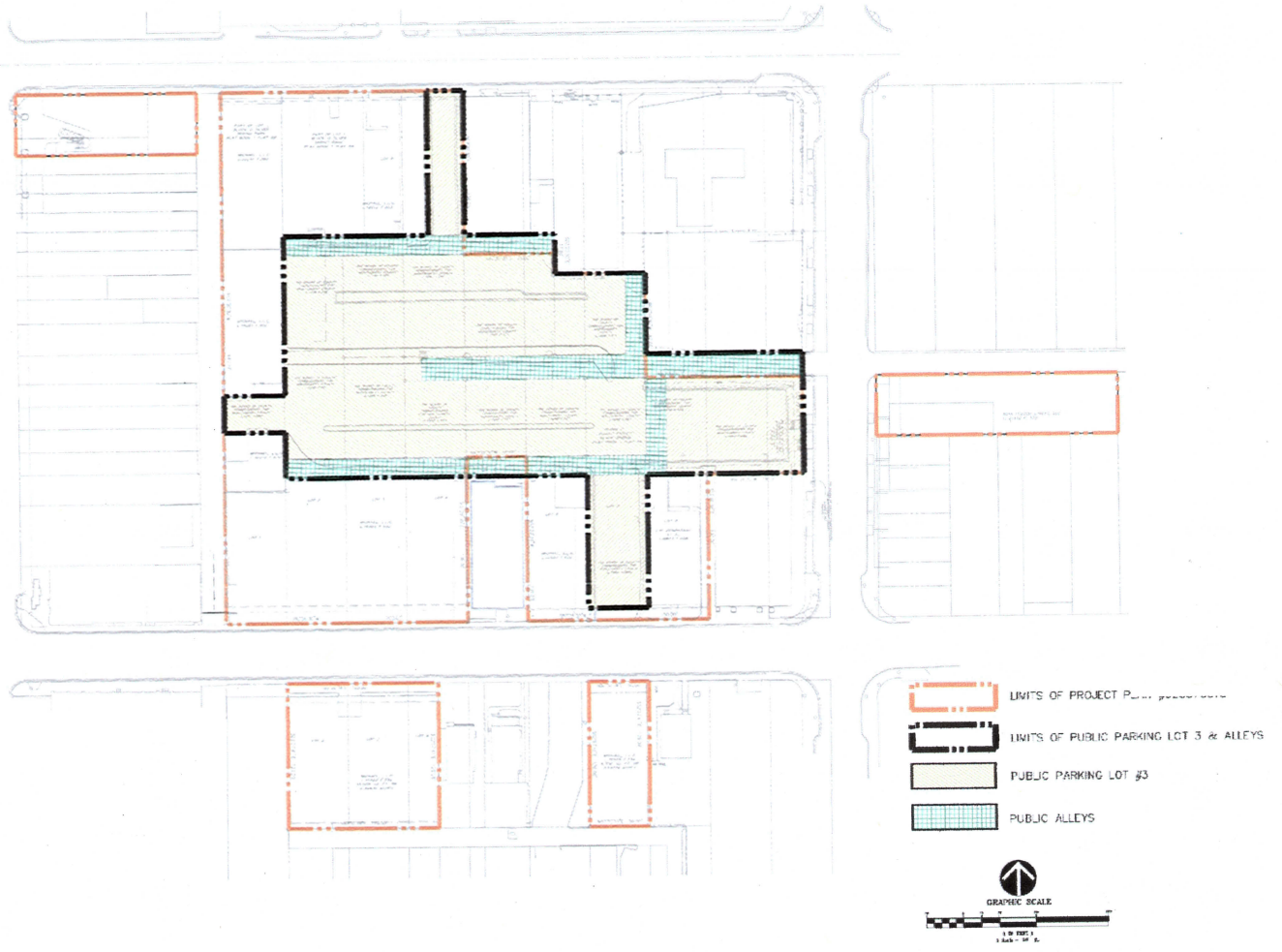
1. Existing Location Plan
2. Existing Property Boundaries and Alleys
3. Existing Alleys: Abandoned and Maintained
4. Limits of Proposed Parking Garage
5. Proposed Garage Access on private street 'A'
6. Parking Garage Sections
7. Parking Garage Plan View

Attachment 1



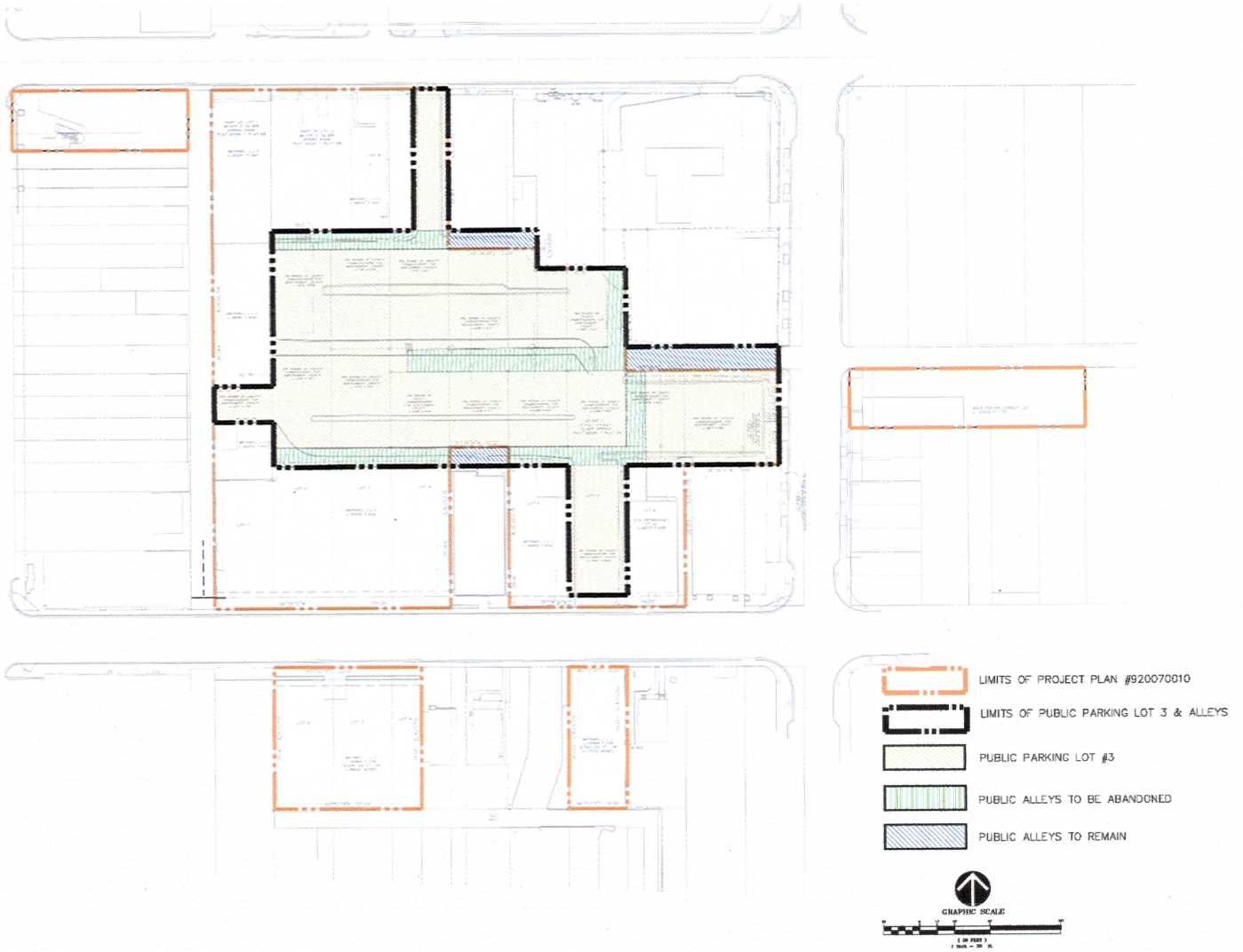
EXISTING LOCATION PLAN

Attachment 2



EXISTING PROPERTY BOUNDARY AND ALLEYS Source: VIKI Inc.

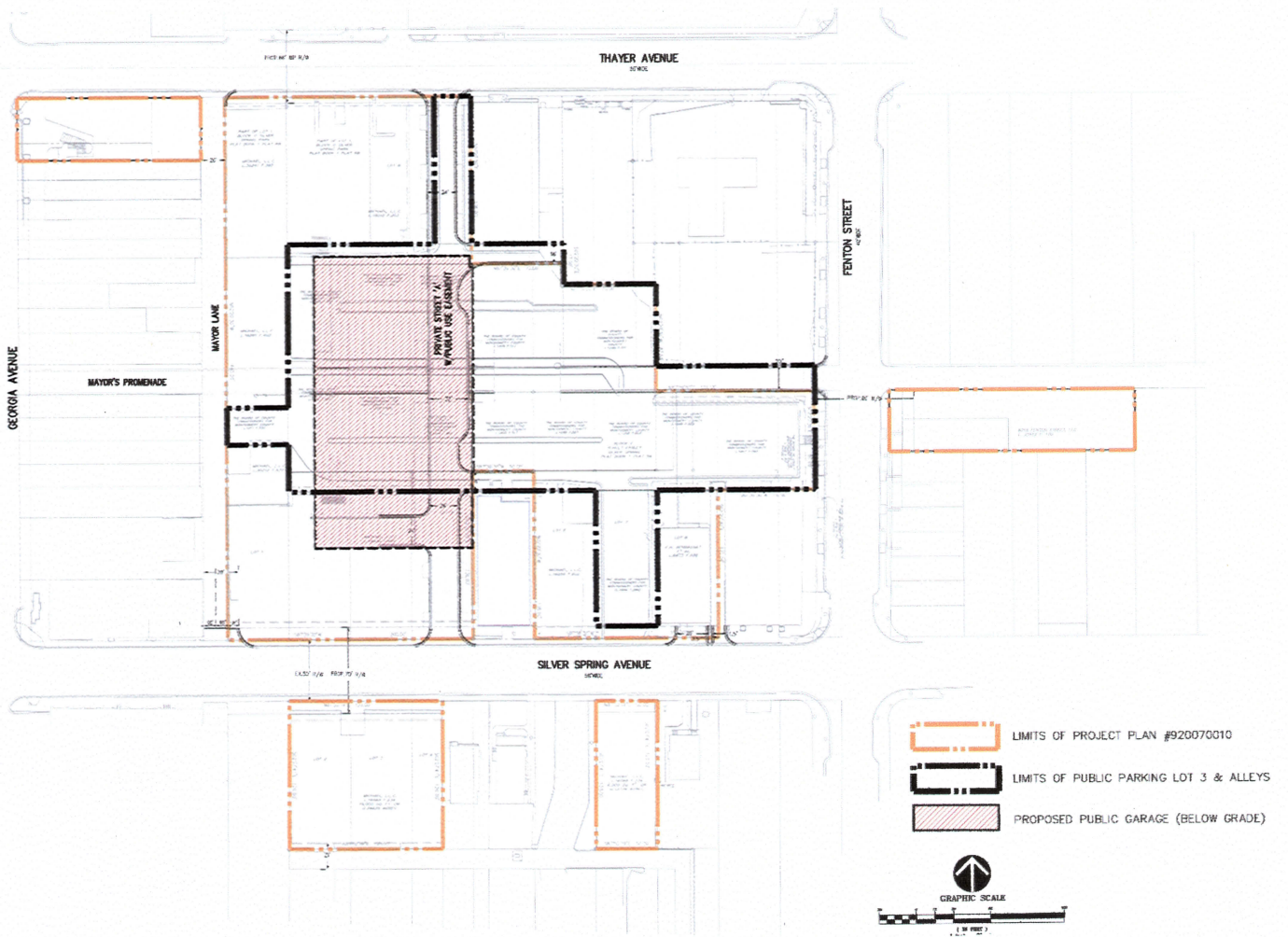
Attachment 3



EXISTING ALLEYS: ABANDONED AND MAINTAINED

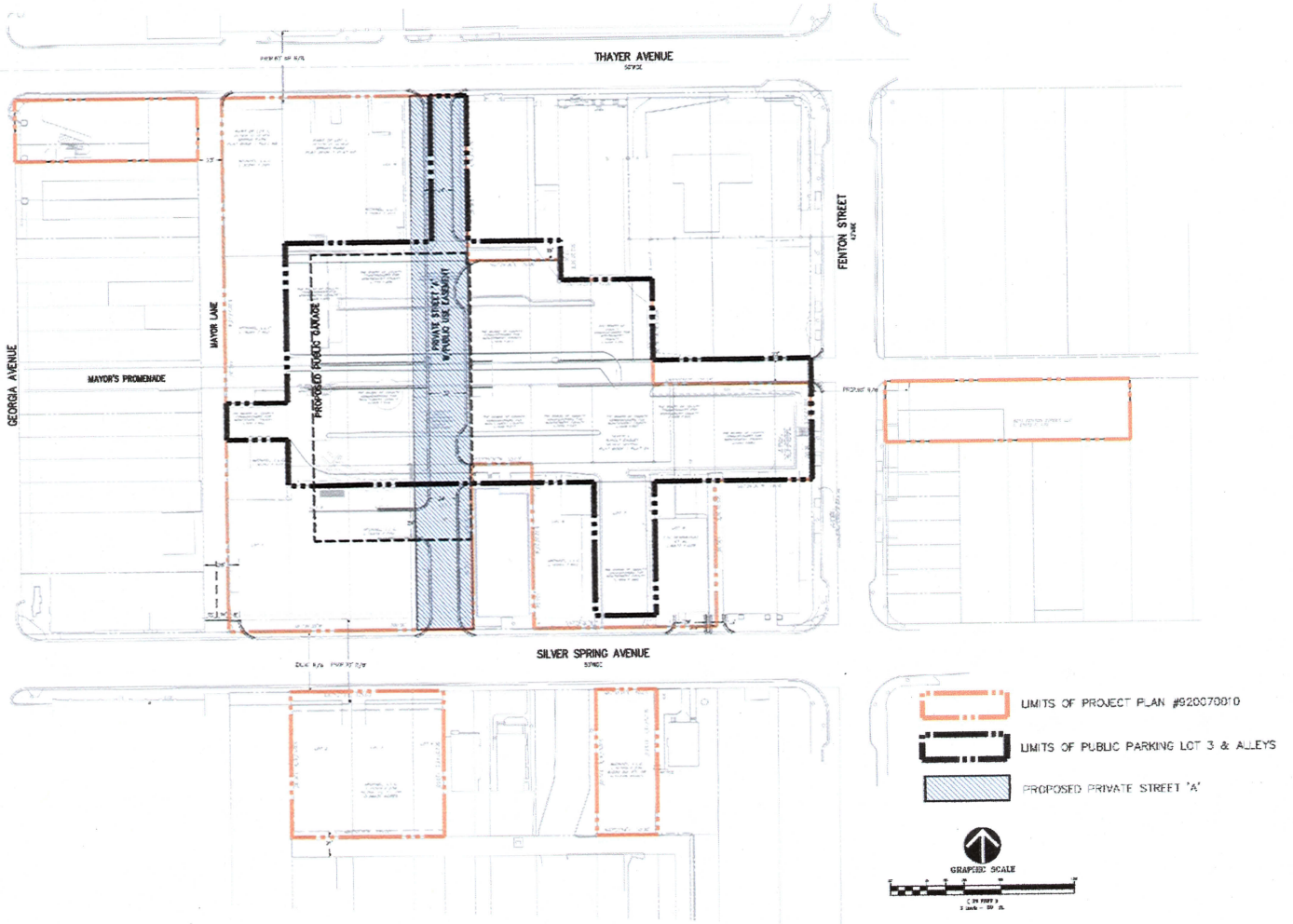
Source: VIKI Inc.

Attachment 4



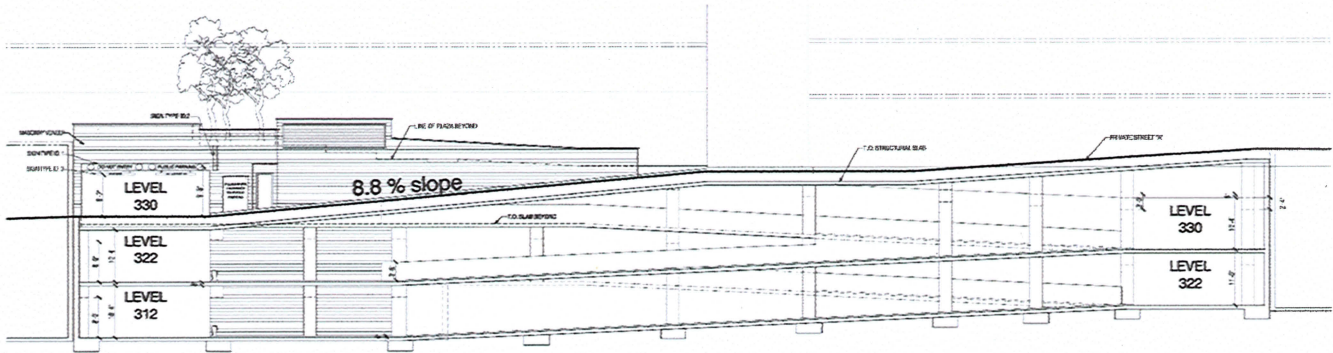
LIMITS OF PROPOSED PARKING GARAGE Source: VIK A Inc.

Attachment 5

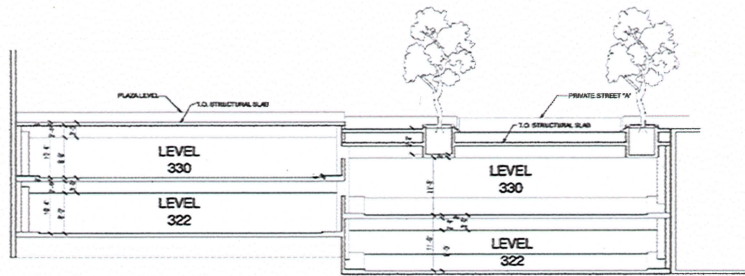


PROPOSED GARAGE ACCESS ON PRIVATE STREET 'A' Source: VIKI Inc.

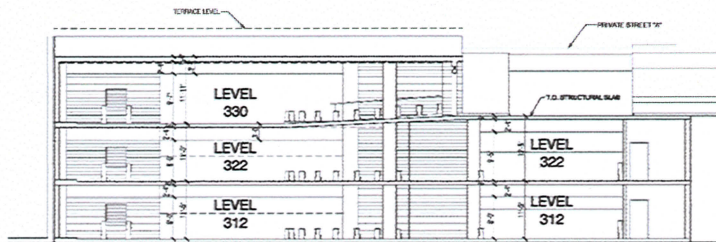
Attachment 6



1 North - South Section
1/8" = 1'-0"



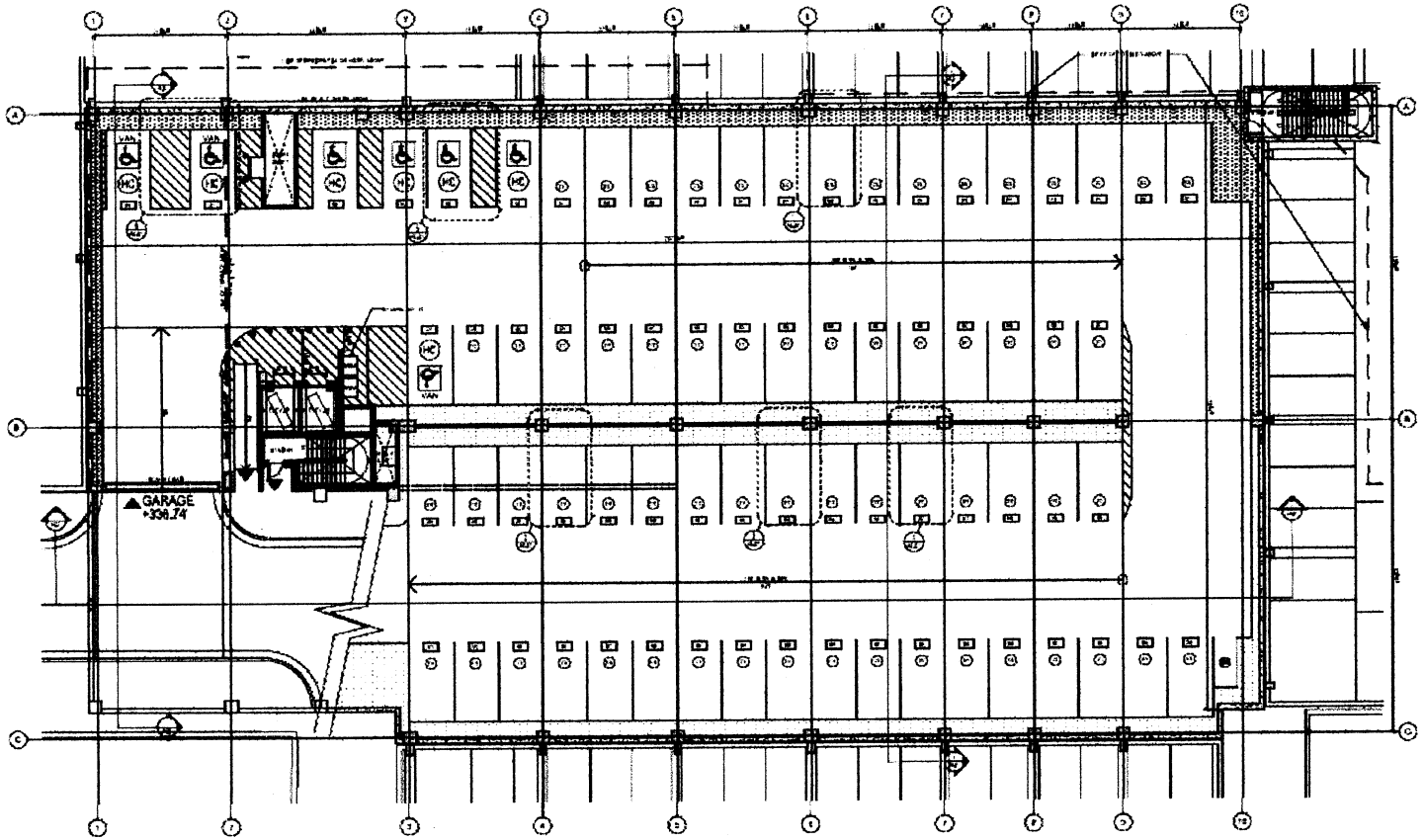
2 East - West Section
1/8" = 1'-0"



1 East - West Section
1/8" = 1'-0"

GARAGE SECTIONS Source: SK&I Architectural Design Group

Attachment 7



GARAGE PLAN VIEW Source: SK&I Architectural Design Group