



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

Edward Lenkin
The Lenkin Company
4922-A Saint Elmo Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814

March 20, 2014

Re: NRI/FSD 420141180
Name of Plan: Lenkin Project
Date Received: March 19, 2014

Dear Mr. Lenkin:

This letter is to inform you that the revised Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) 420141180, named Lenkin Project, is **approved**. A forest conservation plan can now be submitted to the Planning Department in conjunction with any application to which it is a necessary component.

Since the property is subject to the Montgomery County Forest Conservation law there shall be no clearing of forest, understory, or tree removal on the subject site prior to the approval of a final forest conservation plan. If there are any subsequent modifications to the approved plan, not including changes initiated by a government agency, a separate amendment must be submitted to M-NCPPC for review and approval prior to the submission of a forest conservation plan.

If you have any questions regarding these actions, please feel free to contact me at (301) 495-4521.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "mf", written over a horizontal line.

Marco Fuster, Senior Planner
Area 1
M-NCPPC

Cc: James Buchheister, RLA (VIKA)

VISION AND GOALS

VISION

This Amendment envisions the Woodmont Triangle Study Area as a vibrant urban, mixed-use neighborhood that emphasizes residential small-scale retail, the arts and public amenities. One-of-a kind small-scale specialty retail stores, art galleries and studio space, and people strolling on pedestrian-friendly local streets characterize this neighborhood.

GOALS

The goals of this Amendment include the following:

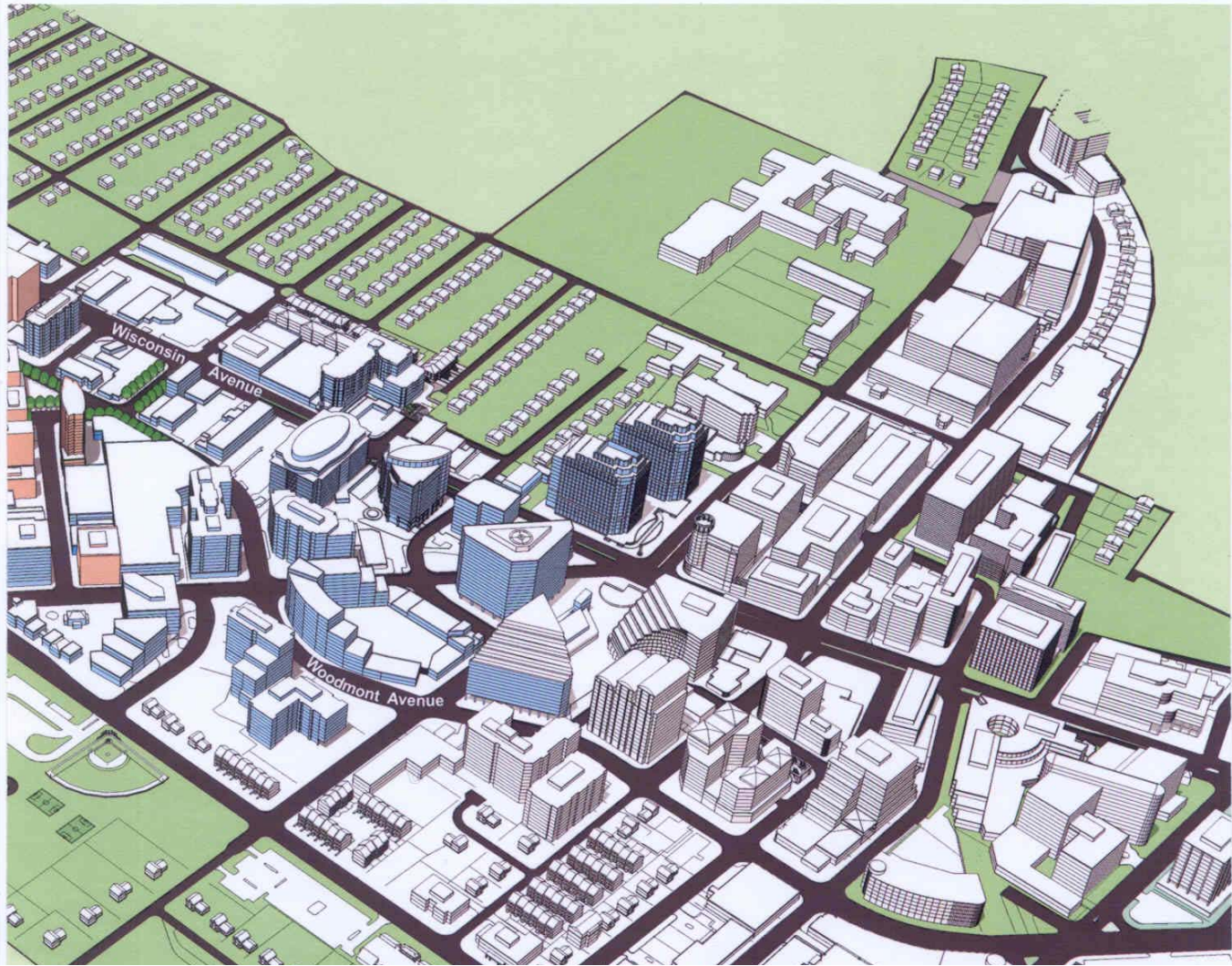
- **Housing** – Provide opportunities to increase the supply of housing to serve a variety of income levels.
- **Small-Scale Retail** – Provide opportunities to retain existing businesses and expand opportunities for new businesses.
- **Arts and Entertainment District** – Enhance the existing public arts programs in the Bethesda CBD and provide opportunities for both the visual and performing arts.
- **Safe and Attractive Streets** – Focus on improving the safety and character of the existing streets. Establish Norfolk Avenue as the main street in the Woodmont Triangle Study Area.
- **Public Amenities** – Increase the flexibility in providing the public use space through the Optional Method of Development by allowing off-site and on-site fulfillment of this requirement, and by identifying a list of priority public amenities.

WOODMONT TRIANGLE PERSPECTIVE

The following perspective shows Norfolk Avenue as the Woodmont Triangle's main street linking its two primary public spaces, Veterans Park and the Battery Lane Urban Park. Woodmont's urban spine will be lined with restaurants, retail and other animating uses. Washington Globe street lights, shade trees, benches, and an arts theme will contribute to a significantly improved pedestrian environment. The proposed Norfolk bikeway will connect the North Bethesda Trolley Trail to the Capital Crescent Trail.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF WOODMONT TRIANGLE

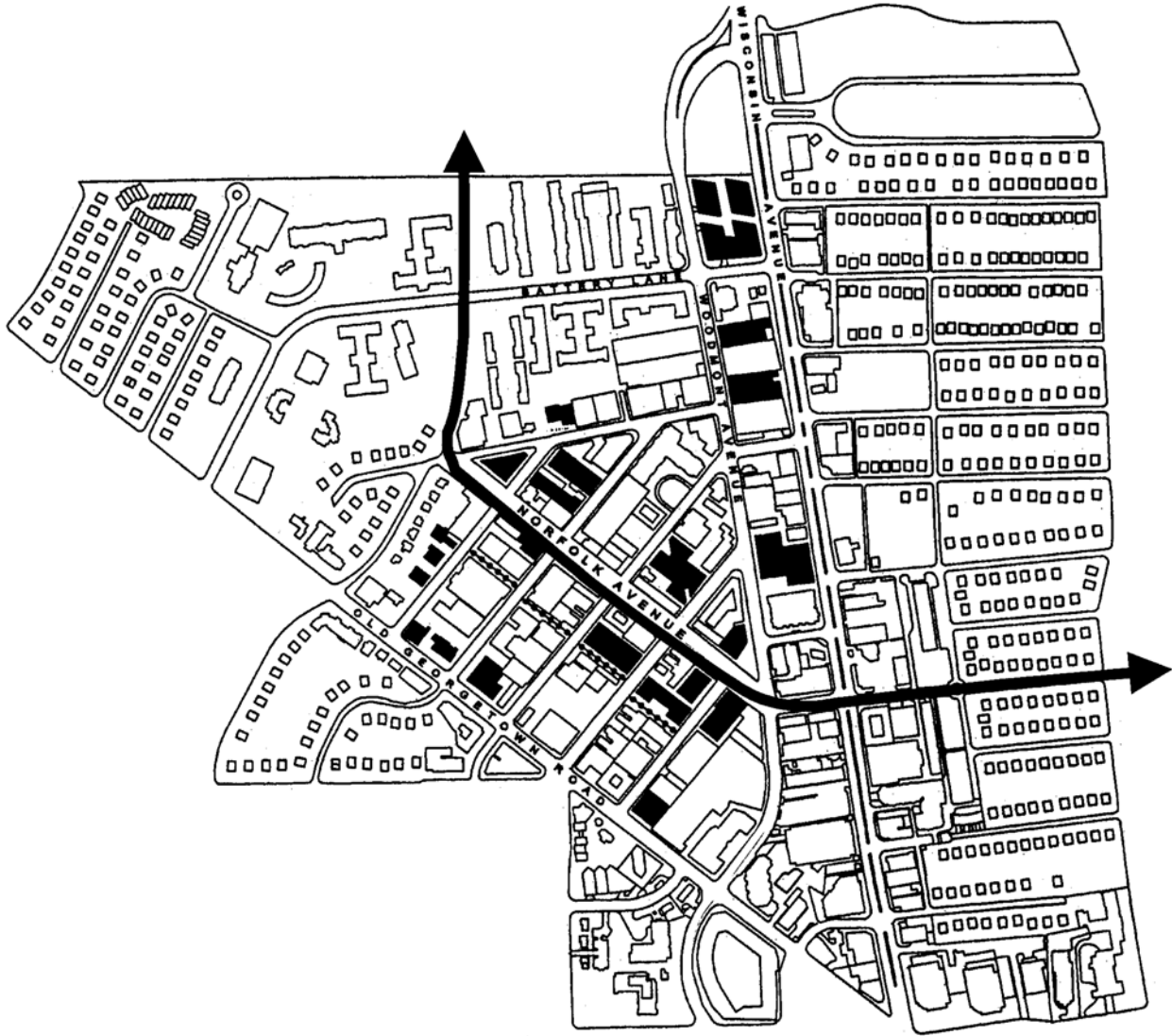


HIGHLIGHTS

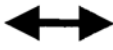
This Amendment to the Sector Plan:

- Reduces the amount of future commercial development and increases the amount of residential development.
- Allows an increase in residential FAR (floor area ratio) to encourage housing.
- Encourages retention of small-scale retail.
- Removes the 1994 Sector Plan height limits to encourage redevelopment, but retains the step down principles from the core and along Norfolk Avenue to preserve solar access.
- Encourages the location of first floor retail.
- Recommends improvements to enhance Norfolk Avenue as the “main street” for the Woodmont Triangle District.
- Recommends improving Battery Lane Urban Park for all users and to provide a better connection between the Woodmont Triangle Study Area, NIH and the North Bethesda Trolley Trail.
- Recommends limited zoning changes to encourage housing.
- Recommends the use of PD zoning at a density of 44 units per acre for the properties along Glenbrook Road and Rugby Avenue currently zoned R-60.
- Recommends amendments to the CBD zones that lowers the minimum lot size necessary to apply for the Optional Method of Development, and provides a transfer of density option.

WOODMONT TRIANGLE STUDY AREA CONCEPT DIAGRAM



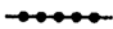
BICYCLE CONNECTION



DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



MID-BLOCK PEDSTRIAN CONNECTIONS



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WOODMONT TRIANGLE STUDY AREA

This Amendment recommends zoning changes, higher FAR and greater building height than were recommended in the 1994 Sector Plan. The 1994 Sector Plan capped heights and FAR below that allowed in the respective CBD zones. The Plan specifically restricted some of the CBD-1 zoned properties to 50 feet in height and CBD-R2 zoned properties to a height of 90 to 110 feet in order to preserve the existing low-density and low-scale character. This Amendment encourages redevelopment to provide housing opportunities along with retention of small-scale retail by eliminating the caps set in the 1994 Plan. The Amendment recommends using the standards of the existing zones to determine building height. Mixed-use projects with moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs) on-site can achieve the greater height and density allowed in the respective zones as specified in this Amendment, but at a FAR no greater than the maximum allowed in the Zoning Ordinance. The Amendment continues to recommend that buildings “step down” from the Metro station area to the edges of the Central Business District except where noted in the specific Block recommendations. The Amendment proposes priority public use space and amenities, emphasizing improvements along Norfolk Avenue, to more fully realize the vision of the 1994 Sector Plan.

In addition to removing the caps of the 1994 Sector Plan, this Amendment recommends that two provisions be added to the CBD zones to encourage redevelopment and yet retain small-scale retail. The first reduces the minimum lot size requirement for the Optional Method; the second allows transfer of density between CBD zoned properties within the Woodmont Triangle Study Area. The transfer of density provides development flexibility whereby existing retail businesses wishing to remain could transfer unused density to parcels within the density transfer area as described in this Amendment. Both these provisions would be added to the CBD zones through a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment, which is more fully described in the Implementation chapter.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

This amendment will capitalize on the development and revitalization potential of the study area as a transit-oriented urban neighborhood. Most of the area is within 2,500 feet of the Metro station, a basic guideline for a transit-oriented development (TOD), and it has the mix of uses that meet TOD criteria. Residents of the Battery Lane District and surrounding neighborhoods shop in the Woodmont Triangle, and they take advantage of its location between two Metro stations. In addition, the Woodmont Triangle hosts many public events as part of the Bethesda CBD Arts and Entertainment District program.

HOUSING

In the ten years since the Sector Plan was approved, the cost of housing in the Bethesda CBD has increased significantly. Although many new dwelling units are becoming available, the diversity and supply of housing are not sufficient to serve a variety of income levels.

- Provide a range of housing opportunities including new low-rise and high-rise housing to serve a variety of income levels.
- Public surface parking lots in the Sector Plan area should be considered for Optional Method housing projects and projects with significant permanent affordable housing, as is being done in other areas in Bethesda such as Lot 31.

BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS

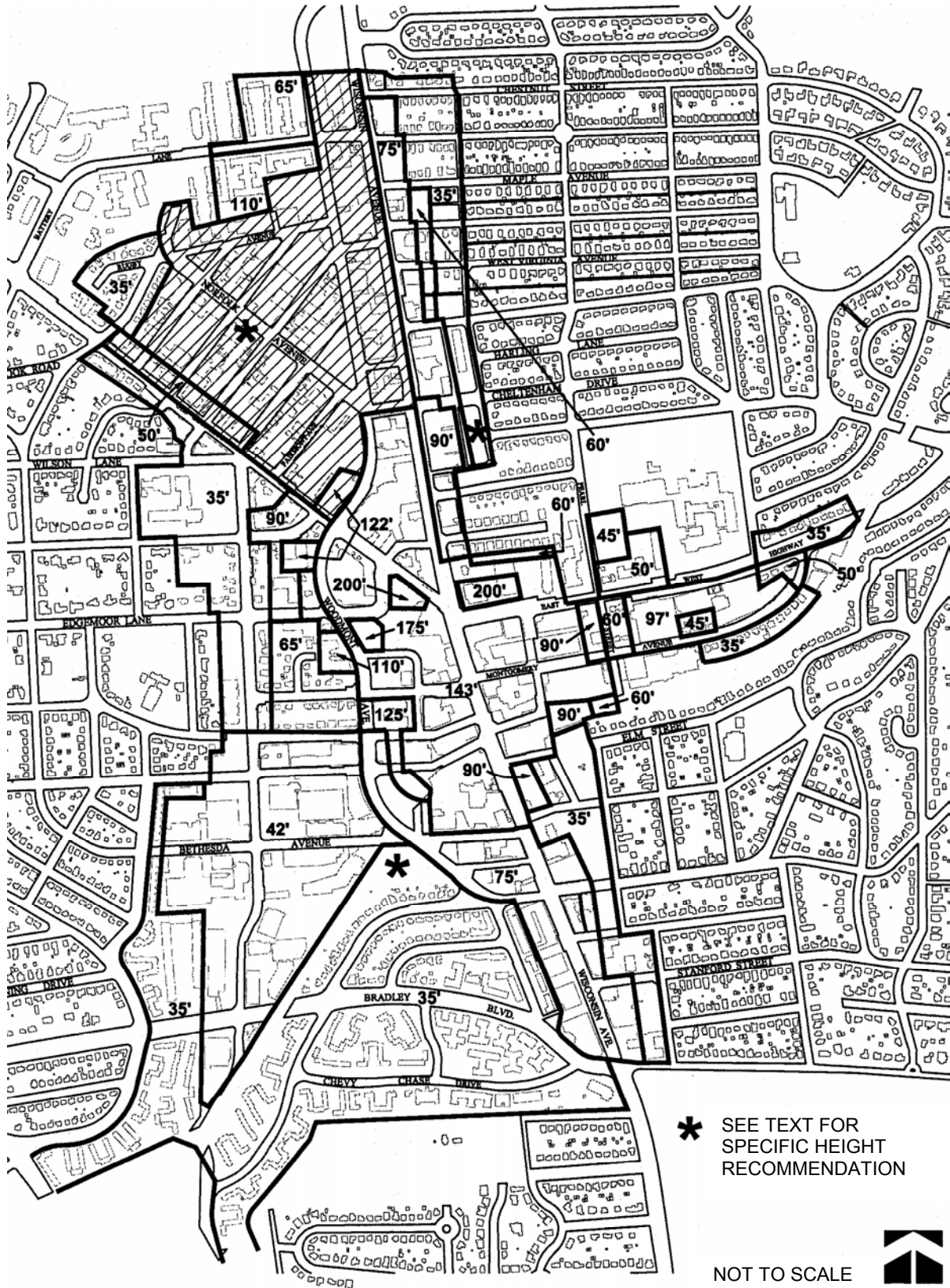
The guidelines for building heights in the 1994 Sector Plan were designed to protect the neighborhoods at the edge of the CBD and to concentrate building height near the Metro station. These goals can still be achieved while changing some of the height limits in the study area.

- Support the “step down” of building heights from the Metro station area to the edges of the Central Business District, but provide incentives for increased building heights to encourage new opportunities for housing for all income levels. Specific height recommendations are discussed in the section entitled “Recommendations by Block within the Study Area.”
- Protect the sunlight to the area’s main street, Norfolk Avenue, by approving development that steps back from Norfolk Avenue, particularly on the southwest side of the street.
- Limit the height along Old Georgetown Road north of St. Elmo Avenue to 50 feet, extending 60 feet back from Old Georgetown Road to maintain compatibility with existing development.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

The 1994 Sector Plan capped heights within the CBD-1 Zone to 50 feet and limited FAR to the limits proscribed under the Standard Method of the CBD zones. This resulted in few development applications under the Optional Method of Development. This Amendment removes the height caps and recommends higher FARs to encourage use of the Optional Method to create more opportunities for residential development and also provide desired public facilities and amenities. The Woodmont Triangle Study Area is a desirable location for future residential development. Housing for a variety of incomes is equally important. Building MPDUs within the study area is a priority for all projects developing under the Optional Method of Development.

PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHTS



* SEE TEXT FOR
SPECIFIC HEIGHT
RECOMMENDATION

NOT TO SCALE



Density – Properties may develop to the density permitted in the CBD-1, CBD-2 and CBD-R2 Zones. CBD-1 mixed-use projects can achieve a floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.0 and those in the CBD-2 and CBD-R2 zones can achieve a FAR of 5.0.

- **FAR** – In order to encourage residential development, the recommended increase in density up to the maximum allowed would be for residential development. All CBD zoned parcels within in the study area will be limited to a FAR of 1.0 for non-residential development.
- **Public Use Space** – The public use space and amenity priorities include improvements to the streetscape, Battery Lane Urban Park, and support for the Arts and Entertainment District through providing public art and private arts facilities. Optional Method of Development projects may provide required public use space off-site, if needed to accommodate MPDUs on-site. This Amendment recommends a text amendment that allows public use space to be provided off-site in the same density transfer area if the Planning Board finds that an off-site location implements a Sector Plan recommendation. If public use space is located on-site, it should contribute to establishing a variety of public spaces in the area. All developments should avoid extensive setbacks of retail from the streets. Public spaces should support retail and an active pedestrian environment.

RETAIL PRESERVATION

The existing commercial enterprises in the study area provide needed goods and services. Some of the businesses are one-of-a-kind retail shops and restaurants, which contribute to the unique urban flavor of the study area. This Amendment encourages the retention of this retail, as did the 1994 Plan, but recommends some additional mechanisms to allow for redevelopment. Reduction in minimum lot size and density transfers are intended to foster new small-scale retail in character with the existing retail environment in the Woodmont Triangle Study Area.

- **Lot Sizes** – Minimum lot sizes of 22,000 square feet were required for Optional Method of Development in the CBD zones to be sure that significant amenity and public use space could be provided on-site. Achieving these minimums in the study area would require assemblage of multiple parcels given the small size of most properties. Requiring larger projects is contrary to the Plan’s goal of encouraging small retail. Moreover, the Plan’s recommendation for off-site public amenities means that a threshold minimum lot size for Optional Method of Development is unnecessary in Woodmont Triangle Study Area.
- **Density Transfer** – In order to encourage retention of existing small-scale retail, incentives are needed to encourage businesses to remain. Density transfer between properties is one way to achieve that goal. This Amendment designates a Density Transfer Area that would be appropriate for this transfer. Owners of small commercial properties that wish to remain can offer unrealized density to other properties to amass enough square footage or FAR to develop a mixed-use project. This density transfer would be permitted through a proposed text amendment; please see the Implementation chapter.

- Provide street-oriented retail, restaurants, and other street animating uses on the first floor of buildings located along streets such as Norfolk Avenue and Cordell Avenue.
- Maintain the established building line along Norfolk Avenue.

PUBLIC AMENITIES AND FACILITIES

In the Woodmont Triangle Study Area, there is a need for revitalization. Businesses have seen their clientele decline over the last several years due to the popularity of Bethesda Row, with its pleasant streetscape environment, new buildings, and attractive assortment of uses. The Woodmont Triangle needs improved lighting for public safety, attractive streets and sidewalks, and incentives to expand uses and hours of operation. In addition to new housing, upgraded public facilities help promote revitalization.

Improvements to Public Streets and Spaces

This Amendment recommends public and private improvements to the public streets and spaces within the study area. The improvements will enhance pedestrian safety and access to transit. Improving the pedestrian and bicycle connections between the NIH, the Battery Lane District, the adjacent neighborhoods and the Metro stations is a primary objective. Either on-site or off-site improvements would be required in the Optional Method of Development according to a list of public use spaces and amenities.

Public Amenities and Public Use Space

The Woodmont Triangle Study Area is an important part of the Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District. Within the study area, there are currently over 20 art galleries, music stores, and dance and music schools. This Amendment supports the continued use of the Optional Method to provide public art, art facilities, and public gathering spaces.

The existing provisions of the Optional Method of Development require a minimum of 20 percent of the net lot area of each parcel be devoted to public use space on-site. Public use space may be provided off-site in the same density transfer area if the Planning Board finds that an off-site location implements Plan recommendations or if needed to accommodate MPDUs. Off-site amenities include streetscape in the public right-of way, improvement to parks, and other public facilities. Public use spaces and amenities approved through the Optional Method of Development will be located to serve the revitalization and improve the vitality of the entire district. To facilitate the development of amenities and public use space appropriate to the Woodmont Triangle Area, this Plan recommends the creation of an amenity fund, addressed in more detail in the Public and Private Funding section.

The following list represents the priority amenities and facilities for the Woodmont Triangle Study Area. Projects should incorporate items from this list as a first priority. This list is not intended to be inclusive of all the facilities and amenities that may be considered. Sufficient amenities and facilities must be provided in each project to serve the additional density and building height proposed in this Amendment. The amenities and facilities in each project should contribute to the function or appearance of the mixed-use urban neighborhood.

Priorities

- Improve Norfolk Avenue as a pedestrian system that connects existing public facilities and amenities, such as Battery Lane Urban Park, the Whitney Theater, the Bethesda Outdoor Stage, Imagination Stage, and Veterans Park to the Capital Crescent Trail. Renovation of Norfolk Avenue should include:
 - Utilities placed underground
 - Washington Globe street lights and other festive lighting
 - Benches, bike racks, brackets for banners, and trash receptacles
 - Street trees
 - Outdoor seating for restaurants and cafes
 - Public art
 - Special paving for sidewalks established as the standard for Bethesda (the Bethesda paver).
- Provide the Bethesda streetscape on other streets in the study area, such as Cordell Avenue.
- Battery Lane Urban Park - A future facility plan should be completed by a developer, in coordination with The M-NCPPC's Park Development Division, in exchange for additional density under the Optional Method of Development or as part of a CIP project. This facility plan will be the guiding document for all future development and improvements within the park including other potential developer-funded projects.
- Improve the intersection of Rugby Avenue and Norfolk Avenue for a better pedestrian and bicycle connection to Battery Lane Urban Park.
- Establish north-south, mid-block pedestrian connections for the blocks located between Old Georgetown Road and Norfolk Avenue.
- Establish a network of diverse urban spaces including public use space on-site.
- Provide public art, art facilities, and public gathering spaces. The arts-related space needs could include the following:
 - Arts incubator space – A stand-alone building or portion of a building open to the public to provide studio space for emerging visual and performing artists.
 - Exhibit, teaching and lecture space – Flexible space within existing or new buildings for a variety of functions.
 - Space for the arts, such as dance studios, a black box theater, and live/work space for artists that could be leased at moderate rates to non-profit arts organizations.

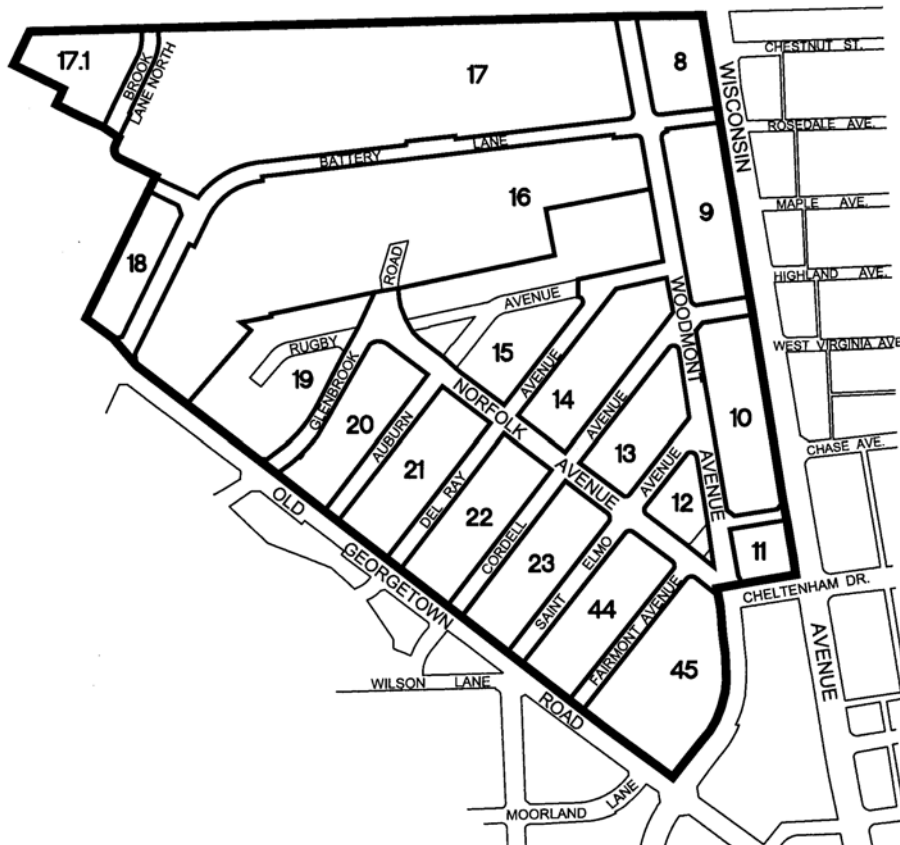
Through the combination of new housing, improved public facilities and the development of an arts theme, the Plan will not only foster revitalization for the Woodmont Triangle, but will also capitalize on its close relationship to the Metro to achieve Sector Plan goals.

Recommended Zoning by Block				
Block	Zoning	FAR	Height in Feet with 12.5% MPDUs	MPDU Bonus Height in Feet (up to 22% greater than otherwise allowed but not greater than indicated below)
8	CBD-1	3.0	90	110
9	CBD-1	3.0	90 ¹	110 ¹
10	CBD-1	3.0	90 ²	110 ²
	CBD-R2	5.0	143	174
11	CBD-1	3.0	118	143
12	CBD-R2	5.0	143	174
13 ³	CBD-R2	5.0	143	174
14 ³	CBD-R2	5.0	143	174
15	CBD-1	3.0	90	110
	CBD-R1	3.0	118	143
	CBD-R2	5.0	143	174
20, 21, 22, 23	CBD-1	3.0	50-90	50-110
44	CBD-2	5.0	143	174
45	CBD-R2	5.0	143	174
	CBD-2	5.0	143	174

¹The height on Parcel 646 may be increased up to 118 feet with 12.5 percent MPDUs or 143 feet with a 22 percent MPDU bonus.

²The height limit on the Plank, Inc. and Troiano properties is 118 feet with 12.5 percent MPDUs or 143 feet, with 22 percent a MPDU bonus.

³Small portions along Norfolk Avenue of Blocks 13 and 14 are zoned CBD-1 and have FAR limits of 3.0, height limits of 90 feet or 110 feet with a 22 percent MPDU bonus.



Blocks 20, 21, 22 and 23

Block 20 contains an office building with associated parking, zoned CBD-1, and single-family homes, zoned R-60. Lots facing Norfolk and Auburn Avenues are zoned CBD-1 with a mix of mid and low-rise retail and office. The portions of Blocks 21-23 between Norfolk Avenue and the edge of the Old Georgetown Road Corridor and are zoned CBD-1. These areas are appropriate for residential mixed-use development. This Amendment confirms the CBD-1 zoning, but allows a FAR of 3.0 to encourage residential development. Height is limited to 50-90 feet or 50-110 feet including a 22 percent MPDU bonus.

Blocks 44 and 45

Blocks 44 and 45 are the blocks in the Woodmont Triangle Study Area that are closest to the Bethesda Metro Station and provide the potential for higher density redevelopment. The existing zoning on these blocks is CBD-1 and CBD-R2. Block 45 contains Garage 11, a public parking garage, and an approved mixed-use development located within the CBD-R2 Zone. There are parcels in Block 45, zoned CBD-1, that could redevelop and may be able to use the transfer of density option. In order to encourage residential redevelopment, this Amendment recommends changing the CBD-1 properties to CBD-2 and retaining the existing zoning on the CBD-R2 property. The Amendment recommends a FAR of 5.0 for all properties in these blocks and a height limit of 143 feet or 174 with a 22 percent MPDU bonus.



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Clarence J. Snuggs
Director

January 20, 2015

Ms. Stephanie Dickel
Area 1 Division
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: St. Elmo Apartments
Sketch Plan No. 320150040

Dear Ms. Dickel:

The Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) has reviewed the applicant's responses to DHCA's Development Review Committee (DRC) comments on the above referenced Sketch Plan. The applicant's letter is responsive to DHCA's DRC comments, and DHCA therefore recommends Approval of the Sketch Plan.

Please note that an MPDU Agreement that is in compliance with Chapter 25A must be executed between the applicant and DHCA prior to the release of any residential building permits.

Sincerely,

Lisa S. Schwartz
Senior Planning Specialist

cc: William Landfair, VIKA Maryland, LLC
Joshua C. Sloan, VIKA Maryland, LLC

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