

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

OPINION

DATE MAILED: January 17, 2001

PROJECT PLAN REVIEW: 9-99001A

PROJECT NAME: Friendship Place (Wisconsin Place)

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Action: Approval. Motion to approve the application was made by Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner Bryant, with a vote of 5-0.
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The date of this written opinion is January 17, 2001 (which is the date that this opinion is mailed to all parties of record). Any party authorized by law to take an administrative appeal must initiate such an appeal, as provided in the Maryland Rules of Procedure, on or before February 17, 2001 (which is thirty days from the date of this written opinion). If no administrative appeal is timely filed, then this Project Plan amendment is hereby extended per Sec. 59-D-2.6 (b)(2) to remain valid for thirty months from the original initiation date, provided that the applicant has filed a complete Site Plan application, as determined by the Planning Board staff within 18 months of the original initiation date and, in the absence of governmental delay, received Site Plan approval within 12 months of the assigned complete application date, per Sec. 59-D-2.7(b) and (c).

On December 18, 2000 Project Plan Review #9-99001-A was brought before the Montgomery County Planning Board for a public hearing. At the public hearing, the Montgomery County Planning Board heard testimony and received evidence submitted in the record on the application. Based on the testimony and evidence presented and on the staff report, which is made a part hereof, the Montgomery County Planning Board finds:

- (a) The Project Plan would comply with all of the intents and requirements of the zone.
- (b) The Project Plan would conform to the approved and adopted sector plan or an urban renewal plan approved under Chapter 56.
- (c) Because of its location, size, intensity, design, operational characteristics and staging, The Project Plan would be compatible with and not detrimental to existing or potential development in the general neighborhood.
- (d) The Project Plan would not overburden exiting public services nor those programmed for availability concurrently with each stage of construction and, if located within a

transportation management district designated under chapter 42A, article II, is subject to a traffic mitigation agreement that meets the requirements of that article.

- (e) The Project Plan would be more efficient and desirable than could be accomplished by the use of the standard method of development.
- (f) The Project Plan would include moderately priced dwelling units in accordance with chapter 25A of this Code, if the requirements of that chapter apply.
- (g) When a project plan includes more than one lot under common ownership, or is a single lot containing two or more CBD zones, and is shown to transfer public open space or development density from one lot to another or transfer densities within a lot with two or more CBD zones, pursuant to the special standards of either section 59-C-6.2351 or 59-C-6.2352 (whichever is applicable), the project plan may be approved by the Planning Board based on the following findings:

- (1) The Project will preserve an historic site, building, structure or area as shown on the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites or the Master Plan for Historic; and/or
 - (2) The Project will implement an urban renewal plan adopted pursuant to Chapter 56 of the Montgomery County Code; and/or
 - (3) The Project will result in an overall land use configuration that is significantly superior to that which could otherwise be achieved.
- (h) The Project Plan conforms to applicable requirements for forest conservation under Chapter 22A.
 - (i) The Project Plan conforms to applicable requirements for water quality resource protection under Chapter 19.

Therefore the Montgomery County Planning Board **APPROVES Project Plan 9-99001A**, which consists of 450,000 sf office, 300,000 sf retail, 300,000 sf housing, 17,200 sf Community Center, option to re-introduce 40,000 sf grocery store with future amendment, and an approximately 1616-space underground parking garage on 8 acres, subject to the following:

1. Development Ceiling
The proposed mixed-use development is limited to 1,050,000 square feet of gross floor area, plus the 17,200 sf Community Center and the "optional" 40,000 sf grocery store.
2. Building Height / Mass
The height of the proposed building shall not exceed 143 feet. One objective of the architectural design shall be to break down the perceived scale of the complex.
3. Community Center
 - a. The applicant, its heirs, successors and/or assigns shall be responsible for ensuring that the proposed center will be properly maintained structurally and be available for the intended uses. The program of the center and the obligation for its management shall be further defined at the time of Site Plan Review and shall be specified in the Site Plan Enforcement Agreement. The agreement setting forth the management arrangement shall be between the applicant and M-NCPPC and/or another public agency. A fee structure that assures full public use and access shall also be defined at Site Plan Review.
 - b. The design of the Center shall be reviewed in detail at the time of Site Plan.
4. Public Use Space

The design of the public spaces shall foster the creation of a discrete character for each space within a unifying theme. The design of these spaces shall be reviewed in detail at the time of Site Plan. The design shall create an inviting environment that will promote public activities during the day as well as at night.

- a. The uses of the major park at the intersection of Willard Avenue and Friendship Boulevard shall complement those of the public use spaces within the Chase Tower development now under construction across Willard Avenue. The park shall be able to accommodate various public functions, such as festivals, performances, and other, passive recreational uses. Applicant shall incorporate traffic calming devices at the driveway serving the housing. An objective of the architectural design should be to address the relationship between the (1) housing façade elements, the (2) major park, and (3) the east-west pedestrian lane.
- b. The Metro Plaza shall be designed to acknowledge its gateway location between the County and the District of Columbia, and to function as the symbolic center of the Friendship Heights Metro Core area. The space shall be well defined by elements such as retail storefronts, kiosks, landscaping, artwork, street trees, and special paving patterns. Historical references including the District of Columbia boundary marker should be incorporated. Applicant shall work with WMATA to establish a design for the escalator canopy for Board approval.
- c. The South Court is proposed as the main on-site public space. It shall be designed to encourage people to congregate and stay. Ample seating areas, special lighting, landscaping and elements of the public art program shall be considered as part of the Site Plan Review process, along with outdoor café and/or informal performance areas.
- d. At Site Plan applicant shall consider ways to animate the south wall of the east-west pedestrian lane between the Community Center and the North Court.
- e. Use of steps in the public space shall be avoided to the extent possible to facilitate pedestrian circulation.

5. Public Art

A public art program that addresses the most prominent public spaces of the project shall be incorporated into the overall design of the development. The concept for the artwork shall be presented to the Planning Board at the Site Plan hearing, after which, using the input from the hearing and the Art Panel, the art shall be refined for subsequent final approval by the Board.

- a. Features such as sculpture, water fountains, special paving inserts, special planters, or special handrails or fences shall be provided on the site, in the public space and/or as part of the architectural design of individual buildings.
- b. The artwork shall be designed and located as an integral part of the development. The artwork shall present a cohesive theme throughout the development that will enhance the quality of various public spaces and enrich the pedestrian experiences.
- c. The artwork shall be installed upon the completion of the public space or individual buildings where the artwork is located.

6. Streetscape

The applicant shall work with other Friendship Heights developers and professional planning staff from Montgomery County and the District of Columbia to develop a coordinated Streetscape Plan with detailed standards for Friendship Heights. The Streetscape Plan shall coordinate site furnishings, materials and standards consistent with retail and other uses. The Streetscape Plan shall incorporate the following:

- a. *Willard Avenue Promenade*: Provide a double row of street trees, the street light recommended by the Streetscape Guidelines, special paving such as brick, street furnishings, and additional landscaping. Ensure continuity of the sidewalk across the taxi stand and the garage entrance. With respect to the retail on either side of steps up to the north courtyard, the Site Plan should detail as much as possible the entrances and the character of this area.
- b. *Western Avenue Promenade*: Where they are healthy and of good landscape quality, retain the existing street trees (Willow Oaks); in addition, provide a second row of trees of medium size. Provide a combined sidewalk and bikeway and bicycle racks. Provide Washington Globe lights along the curb. Enhance the promenade with special paving such as brick, additional landscaping, public art, and street furnishings. Ensure continuity of the promenade across the drop-off and significantly reduce the scale of the drop-off with the intent of preventing interruption of the second row of shade trees. The drop-off is not intended to be a taxi stand. Place utilities underground if a location can be found that does not significantly disturb the existing trees. This determination shall be made during Site Plan Review. All requirements are subject to approval by the District of Columbia. Applicant shall consider incorporating such activating uses as a sidewalk café in the retail building along Western Avenue. Any permanent structures, such as kiosks, stairs, elevator envelope at the Metro Center Plaza should reinforce the Western Avenue street edge.
- c. *Friendship Boulevard*: Provide a public sidewalk with brick paving. Include single-fixture Washington Globe lights, additional street trees to form a single row, and street furnishings. Ensure continuity of the sidewalk across the entrance/exit points for the garage, service area and apartment building. Final design of the loading and parking doors will be reviewed in detail at Site Plan Review.
- d. *Wisconsin Avenue Urban Boulevard*: Provide as a minimum a double row of London Plane trees (one may be in the median) and other streetscape elements to reinforce the Urban Boulevard while providing views of street-front retail, double-fixture Washington Globe lights, special paving such as brick and other street furnishings. Ensure that the segment of the Urban Boulevard between Western and Willard Avenues reads as part of a continuous, retail, shopping street while creating a special place at Metro Plaza. Applicant shall address enhancement of the pedestrian linkage around the corner of Wisconsin onto the unused ROW (subject to DPWT approval) at Site Plan Review.
- e. Applicant's responsibility for crosswalks on all bounding streets shall be determined at Site Plan Review.

7. Tree Preservation

The existing street trees along Western Avenue and Friendship Boulevard shall be saved, where they are healthy and of good landscape quality. Appropriate tree protection measures shall be proposed and reviewed at the time of Site Plan Review.

8. Phasing of the Public Amenity Features

The proposed public amenity features shall be completed in phases sequentially that are consistent with the completion and occupancy of the various buildings. Phase I includes the new Hecht's store, the apartments, street front retail, the western office building and the Community Center, along with the two parks and the western part of the garage. Phase II

includes the eastern office building and the remaining retail. Public amenity space will generally be completed as each adjacent building is finished, subject to seasonal considerations for landscaping. Phase II may commence before the completion of Phase I. The currently anticipated phasing sequence is further defined as follows:

- a. The public park at the intersection of Friendship Boulevard and Western Avenue and the streetscape along Friendship Boulevard and Western Avenue that is adjacent to the new Hecht's store shall be completed when the new Hecht's store is completed, subject to seasonal consideration for landscaping.
- b. The Community Center shall be completed no later than the "base building" completion of the final building in Phase I.
- c. In no case shall the construction of the major park north of the housing drop-off lane commence later than 24 months after 75% occupancy of the Phase I office/retail building, subject to seasonal consideration for landscaping.
- d. The balance of the courtyard, interior lanes, drop-offs and streetscape will be completed concurrently with the 70% occupancy threshold of Phase II.
- e. This Phasing Plan for Public Amenity Features is subject to refinement at time of Site Plan Review.

9. Moderately Priced Dwelling Units

Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs), shall be provided on-site in accordance with Section 25A. Fifteen (15) percent of the total number of dwelling units of the proposed housing development shall be Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU's). If the requirements of 25A applicable to this Project Plan are revised, the required percentage and number of MPDU's shall be provided according to the County Code applicable at the time of building permit for the housing.

10. Parking

At least 20 short-term parking spaces shall be provided to the public, free of charge for 20 minutes, in the parking garage near the Metro station.

11. Taxi, Metro, and other Access

The following items shall be incorporated into the Plan:

- a. Convenient, secure bicycle parking for Metro
- b. Exterior access for shuttle buses to the Community Center and general retail

12. Grocery Store

Applicant retains the option to propose re-introduction of the grocery store on the first parking level, subject to an amendment to the Project Plan which incorporates the grocery store design.

13. Maintenance and Promotion

The applicant shall agree to participate in Friendship Heights maintenance and programming organization, should such an organization be created. The applicant shall, at time of Site Plan, conceptually describe the following programs:

- a. A maintenance, management, and security program for all on-site and off-site amenity areas (including public use spaces and streetscape)

- b. An activity program for the public spaces

14. Adequate Public Facilities

To satisfy the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, limit the development to the following:

- a. 300,000 square feet of retail space replacing the existing 176,188 square foot Hecht's building
- b. 450,000 square feet of office space
- c. 275 high-rise apartment units
- d. 40,000 square feet of retail for a grocery store
- e. approximately 1,616 garaged automobile parking spaces

15. Road Rights-of Way

The proposed development shall provide required road rights-of-way for the following streets:

120 feet for Wisconsin Avenue

90 feet for Willard Avenue between the Hills Plaza and Friendship Boulevard

120 feet for Western Avenue

16. Road Improvements

- a. To satisfy Local Area Transportation Review (LATR), the applicant shall participate equally with the owner/developer of Friendship Commons (PP 1-99039) and the owner/developer of Chevy Chase Center in the following two road improvements. The road improvements shall be completed prior to the issuance of any occupancy permit for any of the developments, with funding provided by the various applicants at the time the improvements are constructed.
 - i. Provide separate left-turn lanes along eastbound and westbound Western Avenue at River Road by re-striping the existing lane designation, and change the traffic signal phasing to provide concurrent signal phasing along Western Avenue.
 - ii. Restripe the existing southbound Friendship Boulevard approach (within the existing curbs) from the existing one left-turn lane and one through/right lane to one left-turn lane, one through lane and one through/right lane. A new signal phasing is needed at this intersection to provide split phasing for Friendship Boulevard and Jenifer Street.
- b. To satisfy Local Area Transportation Review (LATR), the applicant shall participate at a 40% share with the developers of Friendship Commons and Chevy Chase Center in funding the cost of:
 - i. adding right-turn lanes within the existing right-of-way on northbound and southbound River Road at Little Falls Parkway at the time of issuance of the initial occupancy permit for any of the development
 - ii. conducting a traffic study at the time that total occupancy of the three Friendship Heights developments (i.e. Wisconsin Place, Friendship Commons and Chevy Chase Center) reaches either 600,000 square feet of office or 350,000 square feet of retail, over and above what already exists on the sites as of the date of this memorandum.

- iii constructing improvements to Little Falls Parkway, if warranted by the traffic study and approved by SHA and M-NCPPC, that widen Little Falls Parkway at the intersection by one lane on the south side within the existing right-of-way to accommodate left turn lanes on both approaches to River Road
- c. Participate equally with the owners of Friendship Commons (PP 1-99039 to fund a traffic signal at either or both site access points common to both projects along Friendship Boulevard' based on actual traffic generated from each primary development within one year of completion and occupancy of both projects, as deemed necessary by a DPWT warrant analysis.

17. Transportation Management

The applicant shall join the Friendship Heights Transportation Management Organization and enter into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and the Montgomery County Department of Public Works (DPWT) to assist in attaining the objectives of the Transportation Management District, including making a best effort to achieve and maintain a non-auto driver mode share of 39 percent of employees. The Traffic Mitigation Agreement shall be included in the Site Plan Enforcement Agreement for the proposed development.