



Item # 7
MCPB
05.06.03

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 29, 2004
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief
Michael Ma, Supervisor *Ma*
Development Review Division
FROM: Mary Beth O'Quinn *mbog*
Planning Department Staff
(301) 495-1322

REVIEW TYPE: Site Plan Review
APPLYING FOR: Mixed use development:
92 residential housing units including 12 MPDUs
123,383 sf general retail, including 87,237 sf existing retail and 44,146 sf new retail space

PROJECT NAME: **Bethesda View**
CASE #: Site Plan #8-04024
REVIEW BASIS: Division 59-D-3: Site Plan Review required for Optional Method in the CBD-1 Zone

ZONE: CBD-1
LOCATION: NW quadrant of Wisconsin Avenue (MD355) and Bradley Boulevard (MD191)
MASTER PLAN: Bethesda CBD Sector Plan

APPLICANT: Sheridan Development Company, LLC
FILING DATE: February 28, 2004
HEARING DATE: May 6, 2004, 2004



STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval of 123,383 sf general retail, including 87,237 square feet existing retail and 44,146 square feet new retail space, 92 residential housing units, including 12 MPDUs provided per the applicant's agreement with DHCA, and 389 garage parking spaces subject to the following conditions:

1. Stormwater Management
Conditions of MCDPS stormwater management concept approval dated December 17, 2003.
2. Transportation Planning
 - a. Conditions of MNCPPC Transportation Planning Division memo dated April 29, 2004, including:
 - i. **Limit the development** to 92 housing units and 125,383 sf retail space;
 - ii. Dedicate 50 feet of **right-of-way** (ROW) and provide an additional 10 feet of **easement** (for Bethesda Streetscape sidewalk and amenities) for a total of 60 feet from the **centerline** of Wisconsin Avenue to the building façade for the length of Parcel 923 and part of Lot 1, Block 2;
 - iii. Dedicate 50 feet of **ROW** and provide an additional 10 feet of **easement** (for Bethesda Streetscape sidewalk and amenities) for a total of 60 feet from the centerline of Bradley Boulevard to the building façade for the length of part of Lot 1, Block 2;
 - iv. Reconstruct the **intersection** on the northwest side of the project site, subject to **final** review and approval of the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA), the **Montgomery**

County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) and the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS): Bradley Boulevard, public alleyway and Strathmore Street, as delineated in the plan dated April 22, 2004; redesign the Bradley Boulevard median to prevent outbound left turning movements onto Bradley Boulevard from the alleyway;

- b. Conditions of Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services communication, dated April 23, 2004, including:
 - i. Provide **signage** on Bradley Boulevard as follows:
 - a. At the vehicular lay-by: "No Parking";
 - b. At the vehicular Lay-by: "Drop Off Area";
 - ii. Coordinate with MSHA regarding signage for the bike path on Bradley Boulevard;
 - iii. Provide **civil engineering plan** of the final dimensions and geometric design of the curb realignment at Bradley Boulevard and Strathmore Street and the vehicular lay-by on Bradley Boulevard, subject to MNCPPC staff, SHA, DPWT, and DPS review and approval prior to signature set; provide illustrative plan for adjacent property owners showing the traffic pattern and turning movements.
- c. Bicycle Planning:
 - i. Coordinate **signage** for the Bradley Boulevard Class III bike path with MSHA;
 - ii. Provide **bicycle parking** as follows: 1 bike rack on Wisconsin Avenue; 1 bike rack on Bradley Boulevard; 10 bike lockers rack within the garage for residents;

3. Environmental

Conditions of MNCPPC Environmental Planning, dated December 3, 2003, including:

- a. Demonstrate prior to building permit that the **interior noise level** is less than or equal to 45 dBA Ldn based on noise generated from Wisconsin Avenue, Bradley Boulevard, the public alleyway, and the on-site loading dock;
- b. Provide program and/or details for **controlling noise levels** generated by stationary sound sources such as heating/ventilation systems, fresh air intakes, and commercial exhaust systems to acceptable levels; show garage exhaust as separate from residential air intake and adequate distance from outdoor amenity space;

4. Signature Set

Prior to signature set approval of the site/landscape plans, the following revisions shall be made and/or information provided, for review and approval by planning staff:

a. General Information

Provide dimensions and materials for roof top mechanical space. A note shall be added to the plans which states that all roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from view of nearby buildings and that noise associated with such equipment shall be mitigated to within the limits set forth in the noise ordinance.

b. Streetscape:

i. General

- a. Provide plan and section(s) showing final dimensions, grading and materials for public use areas: sidewalks, tree boxes, steps, cheek walls, and tree spacing;
- b. Verify **ADA compliance** for public space and rights-of-way;
- c. Show the location of bus stops/shelters;
- c. Show details of **loading** and delivery **entrances** and garage/loading doors (Bradley Boulevard);
- d. Provide **details** for the public use space: show materials and dimensions for **planters**, seat walls, furnishings, fixtures, paving, etc;
- e. Show locations of all utilities associated with the site frontage.

ii. Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard

- a. Provide plan and sections of the terrace(s) showing materials and dimensions and grading; delineate changes in pavement materials and banding; show final locations of Bethesda Streetscape lighting, trees, and benches, to be coordinated with SHA, DPS, and DPWT.

- b. Coordinate the final design of the seat walls and planters within the public use space with the curbing and paving for the vehicular lay-by, subject to review and approval by MNCPPC staff, SHA, DPS, and DPWT.
 - d. Other
 - i. Provide the development program inspection schedule;
 - ii. Show street trees along all public streets.
- 5. Public Art

Provide an illustrative plan showing the scale and extent of the public art as part of the Signature Drawing Set; Significant change to the public art program or artist requires filing of a Site Plan Amendment.
- 6. Lighting, Power, Signage

Provide specifications for exterior building lighting at garage entrances, loading docks, and building entrances;

 - a. Provide **lighting distribution** plans for the garage;
 - b. Provide documentation on hours of operation of **night lighting** within the public alleyway and the public use space; show that the lighting provided will not trespass to housing units above or neighboring residences.
- 7. Site Plan Enforcement Agreement

Submit a Site Plan Enforcement Agreement, Development Program, and Homeowners Association Documents (if applicable) for review and approval prior to approval of the signature set as follows:

 - a. Development Program to include a phasing schedule as follows:
 - i. Street tree planting must progress as street construction is completed, but no later than six months after completion of the units adjacent to those streets;
 - ii. Phasing of dedications, stormwater management, sediment/erosion control, recreation, forestation, trip mitigation or other features.
 - iii. Provide installation of streetscape, both on-site and off-site, prior to occupancy of the buildings, excepting landscaping for seasonal considerations.
 - b. Forest Conservation Plan shall satisfy all conditions of approval prior to recording of plat and DPS issuance of sediment and erosion control permit.
 - c. No clearing or grading prior to M-NCPPC approval of signature set of plans.

ISSUES OF SITE PLAN REVIEW

In the course of site plan review, staff and applicant reviewed building facade lines, open space and public amenities, the general massing and scale of the structures, underground parking capacity, with particular attention to vehicular and pedestrian safety within this highly urban context. Collaboration between applicant and MNCPPC, DPS, DPWT, and MSHA staff produced recommendations for specific solutions to vehicular and pedestrian issues, as discussed below. Streetscape design was considered for pedestrian safety, with implementation of the Bethesda Streetscape standards and the connections of the public sidewalks to the major public plaza.

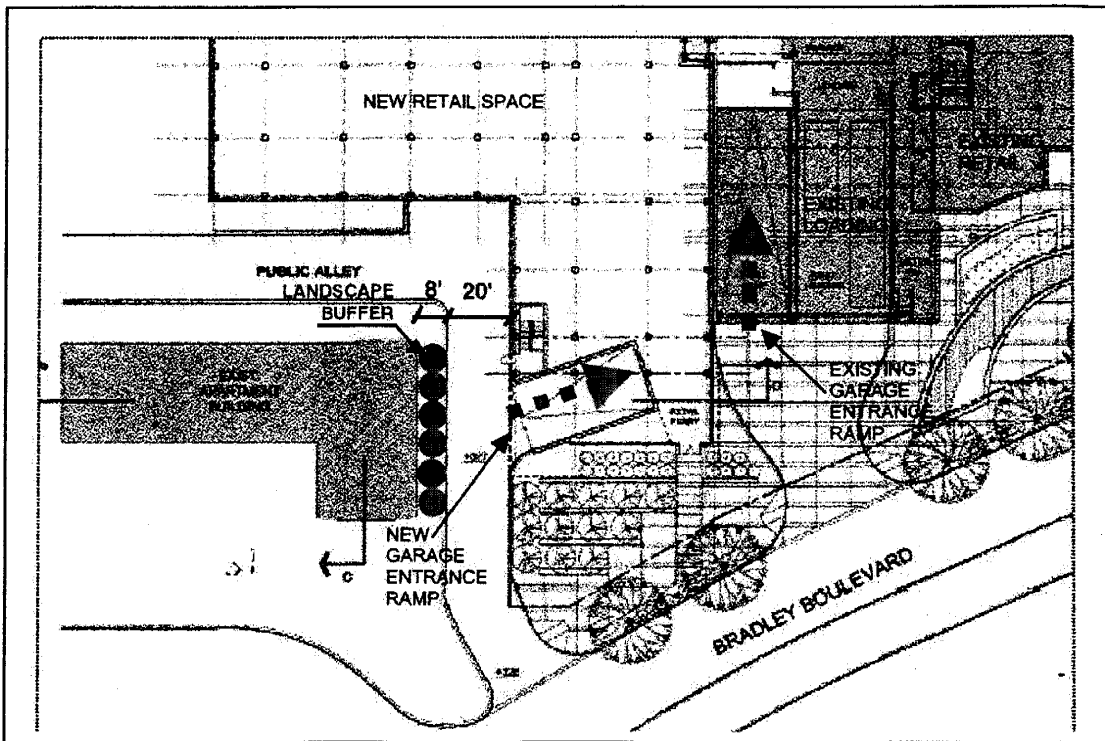
A number of issues required significant study on the part of the applicant team, relevant county agencies, and M-NCPPC staff: 1) Pedestrian Safety, with particular attention to

I. Compatibility with Adjacent Existing Development

The unusual form of this block, as the "point" of Bethesda, is shaped by the curve of Bradley Boulevard at its juncture with Wisconsin Avenue. This narrowed point of land area effectively prescribes the form of the existing retail building and dictates the directional turn of the public alleyway that bisects the block along the north-south axis. Logically, the public alley further defines the boundary of uses and character inherent to this urban block: commercial, retail, and high-rise buildings to its east along the Wisconsin Avenue frontage; low-rise residential structures to its west, facing Strathmore Street.

The subject plan, featuring eight-story development with four-level underground parking, proposes to solidify the urban character established on Wisconsin Avenue in its height, density, and massing. The below-grade parking for residential and retail users features two ingress/egress points: 1. The existing garage ramp adjacent to the loading dock, accessible directly from Bradley Boulevard, and; 2. A second ramp located at the rear of the housing tower, 75 feet from Bradley Boulevard, accessible through the short end of the public alley.

The apartment building located on the north side of the alley's turned end, comprises the nearest adjacent structure. The south facade of this three-story building lies 28 feet from the proposed garage ramp on the south side of the alley. The building's first floor residential windows are most directly affected by the proposed use. The property owner of the adjacent low-rise apartment building has expressed concern about the impact of the proposed development and its associated activity on his tenants.



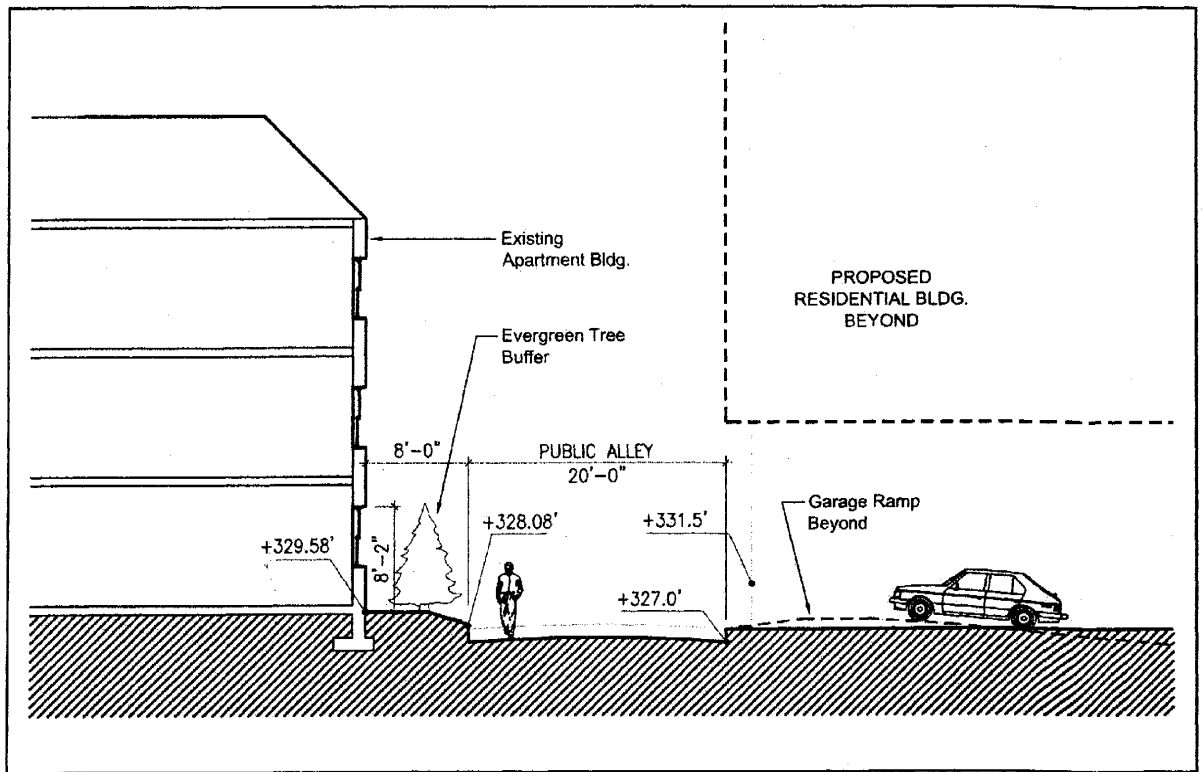
Apartment Owner's
Concern:

The proposed new garage entrance via the public alleyway will negatively impact the residents of the rental units because of its close proximity. The owner has requested via telephone conversation that the applicant provide landscaping and replacement windows for the south façade of the building to minimize the impact of air pollution, traffic congestion and noise attributable to vehicles and operation of the garage gate.

Applicant Position:

The applicant proposes two points of vehicular access to the underground parking in the interest of safety to: 1. Enhance the safety of vehicular movement within the garage itself and; 2. Provide alternate vehicular ingress/egress in the event of an emergency. Further revision to the garage design during site plan review has resulted in full vehicular interconnection between the retail and residential components of the garage.

The applicant proposed to eliminate the existing use of the alley for commercial loading and trash pick-up. Residential vehicular use expected to assume a greater proportion of the activity within the alley. The new garage design features a security gate that is recessed significantly within the building itself. The applicant also proposed landscaping with coniferous trees for the area directly adjacent to the apartment building.



Sectional drawing showing the apartment building on the right, the public alley at center, and the proposed building's vehicular access at the right. Coniferous trees planted at eight feet are shown screening the existing windows.

Staff Recommendation:

Points of Access

The location of the two garage entrances is prescribed by the limitation on vehicular access from Wisconsin Avenue and the location of the existing access point directly from Bradley Boulevard. The State Highway Administration recommendation does not encompass vehicular access from Wisconsin Avenue, in agreement with the Sector Plan goals for pedestrian character of this major urban boulevard.

The vehicular access to the proposed development has been well considered during the site plan review. The applicant's proposal for two garage entrances provides a level vehicular access that is commensurate with the density of the development and will ensure adequate, safe, and efficient passage.

Design Revision and Level of Use

The revised garage design, with significant change to the building's structure, will allow a more efficient movement of traffic within the garage and will allow residential drivers to utilize the retail garage entrance/exit with direct access at Bradley Boulevard. It is anticipated that this change will result in a lower level of use of the alleyway garage access. Recommendations by MSHA and DPS for curb realignments at Strathmore Street will enhance the safety of vehicular movements entering and exiting the public alley. [See discussion below regarding the curb realignments.]

Environmental Effects: Noise, Pollution, and Congestion

The use of the alley for residential passage promises a less intense level of activity and a type and frequency of use that is similar to that generated by the apartment residents. Site plan review included relevant study of the area immediately impacted by the garage access, including analysis of the adjacent building's façade, grade levels of the garage and the alley, and directional elevation heights of headlights. The applicant proposes appropriate mitigation for the attendant impacts of the new development, as follows:

1. Landscaping is of adequate density and height screen headlight glare;
2. Planting depth and area dimension are sufficient to ensure the longevity of the planting;
3. Vehicle headlights will not shine directly into the apartment windows because the surface grade of the alley and garage exit ramp is sufficiently lower than the sills of the apartment windows.
4. Change to the garage traffic pattern will reduce some of the new resident vehicular traffic in the alleyway;
5. The elimination of the commercial use of the alley will result in an activity level that is more compatible with the adjoining residential use.

II Vehicular and Pedestrian Safety

The tight urban pattern that emanates from established road patterns and this unusual block form, creates a significant challenge to achieving adequate vehicular access in the face of increased pedestrian activity. As the desired goals of the Sector Plan are achieved through community-serving retail, and realization of the Bethesda Streetscape, significant effort is demanded to produce solutions to infill development. Such a condition exists at the juncture of Bradley Boulevard, Strathmore Street, and the above-discussed public alleyway. MSHA and DPS, well as the applicant's consultants, offered the recommendation for curb realignment at Strathmore Street.

Applicant Position:

The applicant agrees with the recommendations of SHA, DPS and MNCPPC Transportation Planning supporting the realignment of the curb line as shown.

SHA recommendation:

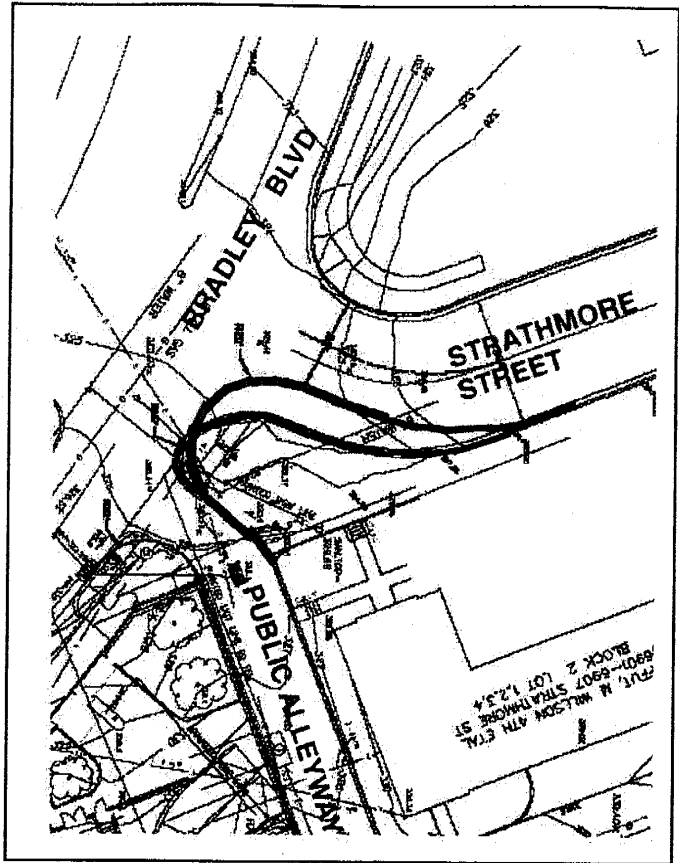
The agency requested a slightly larger turning radius at the entrance to the public alley to increase the spacing between the two curb cuts on Bradley Boulevard. The realignment will ease the movement of traffic into and out of the alleyway.

DPWT and DPS:

The two agencies concur with the recommendation of SHA and find that the realignment will enhance both pedestrian and vehicular safety. Both agencies recommended that the community be notified of the proposed design recommendations.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff supports the recommendations of SHA And the opinion of DPS and DPWT that The realignment will promote greater pedestrian and vehicular safety. Staff finds that the realignment may discourage non-local traffic from using Strathmore Street, and achieve some measure of traffic calming. A plan showing the proposed realignment was mailed to all appropriate parties as an attachment to the hearing notice.



Detail showing curb realignment recommended for Strathmore Street. The blue line shows the existing curb, the red line shows the new curb line. The new alignment will promote traffic calming.