



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

January 20, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Catherine Conlon, Acting Supervisor
Development Review Division

Michael Ma, Supervisor
Development Review Division

VIA: Shahriar Etemadi, Supervisor
Transportation Planning

FROM: Ed Axler, Planner/Coordinator *EA*
Charles S. Kines, Planner/Coordinator
Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Preliminary Plan No. 1-05018 and Site Plan No 8-05003
Westfield Shoppingtown Montgomery Mall
Potomac Policy Area

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review of the subject Preliminary Plan and Site Plan to expand the existing regional shopping mall ("Mall") by 308,225 square feet in a C-2 zone. The preliminary plan was reviewed under the *FY 2005 Annual Growth Policy (AGP)* because it was filed after July 1, 2004.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation Planning staff recommends the following conditions as part of the transportation-related requirements to approve this Preliminary Plan and Site Plan:

1. Limit the development to the following:
 - a. Preliminary Plan to an increase of 500,000 square feet of gross leasable area (sf gla) for a maximum of 1,742,172 sf gla of general retail uses including a multi-screen movie theater and a future hotel.
 - b. Site Plan to an increase of 300,000 sf gla for a maximum of 1,542,172 sf gla of general retail uses including a multi-screen movie theater but excluding the hotel at this time.

2. Dedicate additional right-of-way for 45 feet from the centerline of Westlake Drive and Westlake Terrace in accordance with the *Potomac Master Plan*, which requires a total of 90 feet for this roadway.
3. Construct a ten-foot-wide shared-use path along Democracy Boulevard, extending from Westlake Drive to the edge of the previous SHA path improvements near the I-270 West Spur. Make a good faith effort to negotiate with the adjoining property owner of the automobile filling station located in the southwest corner of the Mall to reconstruct the existing pedestrian path to provide for a ten-foot-wide shared-use path along Westlake Drive and Democracy Boulevard.
4. Construct an eight-foot-wide shared-use path on the east side of Westlake Drive with at least a two-foot-wide setback from the curb, extending from Democracy Boulevard to Westlake Terrace.
5. Upgrade the existing bike lanes on the south side of Westlake Terrace at the Mall access point/Auto Park Avenue where the existing eastbound right-turn lane is to be reconstructed.
6. Construct seven-foot-wide concrete sidewalks along Westlake Terrace from Westlake Drive to the east side of the Mall access point/Motor City Drive.
7. Satisfy Local Area Transportation Review by constructing the following intersection improvements:
 - a. Add a northbound and a southbound right-turn lane from Seven Locks Road to Democracy Boulevard.
 - b. Reconfigure the existing right-turn lane on eastbound Tuckerman Lane at Seven Locks Road into a combination right and through lane that would provide two through lanes.
 - c. Reconfigure the two-lane southbound Westlake Drive approach at Democracy Boulevard to an exclusive right-turn lane and a combination right, through, and left lane (i.e., instead of the current combination right, through, and left lane and exclusive left-turn lane).
8. Place in reservation for future dedication an additional 35-foot-wide transitway right-of-way (additional to the requirements of the right-of-way for this road as recommended in the North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan) along Westlake Terrace from the I-270 West Spur leading to the location of the relocated transit center in the northeast corner of the Mall east of Motor City Drive. The 35-foot-wide transitway right-of-way west of Motor City Drive along Westlake Terrace is no longer needed where the right-of-way may differ from the specific language in the master plan but remains consist with its intent.

9. Provide the following non-automobile transportation amenities to promote transit and bicycle use in accordance with the attached Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) Program of Requirements, and conceptual drawing dated January 8, 2005. The summary of those recommendations is as follows:
 - a. Relocate, provide space for, connect utilities (i.e., for telephone service, lighting, security cameras, and kiosk information signs), and construct the relocated transit center foundation, pad, and related infrastructure in the northeast corner of the site during the first phase of Mall reconstruction in accordance with the attached DPWT Program of Requirements. Include in the transit center design six bus bays, two layover locations, a bus ramp up to Westlake Terrace for eastbound buses exiting the transit center, safe and adequate access horizontally and vertically for the transit riders, and independent access for each bus.
 - b. Construct one large canopy structure covering passenger-waiting areas with other transit-friendly amenities that would make the transit center a more attractive option to drivers of single-occupant vehicles. Include adequate lighting and a connection for future real-time transit information signs.
 - c. Provide a location for transit information kiosks with display panels and the necessary electrical and cable conduit connections for future real-time transit information signs, closed-circuit security cameras, and/or variable message boards located at the transit center as well as at the Mall's customer service desk and/or at a comfortable waiting area inside the Mall (possibly in food court). Final locations to be mutually agreed upon with DPWT and the applicant prior to site plan signature set. The kiosks are to be manned by County-provided personal.
 - d. Provide bike racks to accommodate up to 32 bikes at locations mutually agreed upon by M-NCPPC, DPWT and the applicant prior to site plan signature set and weather-protected where possible.
 - e. Provide three taxicab stands in proximity to the transit center.
 - f. Provide and prepare a conceptual design for 250 commuter parking spaces in close proximity to the transit center as currently provided, with between 25 and 50 spaces located on the east side of the transit center within the SHA I-270 West Spur right-of-way.
10. Enter into an access easement agreement with DPWT and WMATA to provide access for transit vehicles to and from the relocated transit center as described in Recommendation No. 9a above.

11. Enter into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement (TMA) with the Planning Board and DPWT prior to release of building permits to participate in the North Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD) as a large non-residential development within its boundary. Participation would assist in achieving and maintaining the traffic mitigation goal for Stage 2 of 39% non-auto-driver mode share for employees.
12. Modify the Memoranda of Understanding starting in 1984 with subsequent amendments with the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) to:
 - a. Continue to provide 300 off-site employee parking spaces during the peak holiday shopping period from Thanksgiving to Christmas.
 - b. Obtain a waiver for the required parking ratio to reduce it to 4.5 parking spaces per 1,000 sf gla, as part of this site plan approval.

DISCUSSION

Site Location and Vehicular Access Points

The site is located within the area bordered by I-270 West Spur to the east, Democracy Boulevard to the south, Westlake Drive to the west, and Westlake Terrace to the north. The current vehicular access points are as follows:

- Democracy Boulevard: One right out only onto eastbound and westbound Democracy Boulevard and one westbound right-turn entrance only.
- Westlake Drive: Three full-movement access points.
- Westlake Terrace: Two full-movement access points opposite Auto Park Avenue and Motor City Drive.

There are no direct access points from I-270.

For the proposed preliminary plan, the changes in the access point are as follows:

- The northernmost full-movement access point from Westlake Drive would be closed to reduce conflicting turning movements from the adjoining shopping center.
- A new right-turn-only for transit vehicles is proposed from the transit center to eastbound Westlake Terrace.

Pedestrian Internal and External Site Facilities

The existing pedestrian network is being upgraded for better internal and external circulation. The path system along Westlake Drive and Westlake Terrace will be upgraded as mutually agreed upon by M-NCPPC, DPWT, and DPS staffs with the applicant as described in Recommendations No. 2 through 6 and reflected in the current preliminary plan and site plan drawings.

Parking Waiver Request

The requested waiver for a parking ratio of 4.5 spaces per 1,000 sf gla as discussed in Recommendation No.12b would be representative of other regional shopping centers nation-wide and in the Washington metropolitan area. Refer to the attached letter dated January 18, 2005. Table 1 below summarizes the occupancy ratio to the number of parking spaces available at this Mall compared with other regional shopping centers in the Washington metropolitan area:

TABLE 1: RESULTS OF PARKING SURVEYS

Day & Date of Mall Parking Survey or Other Malls	Square Feet of Gross Leasable Area (sf gla)	Percent Occupancy*	Parking Ratio: Occupied Spaces per 1,000 sf gla	Multi-Screen Theaters
At Westfield Shoppingtown Montgomery Mall				
Saturday, Jul. 10, 2004	1,242,172	57.8%	3.0	3-Screens
Friday, Nov. 26, 2004	1,242,172	87.1%	4.47	3-Screens
Saturday, Nov. 27, 2004	1,242,172	79.7%	4.09	3-Screens
In Comparison with Other Recently-Expanded Large Regional Shopping Malls				
Wheaton Plaza	1,440,244	N/A	4.15	11-Screens
Tysons Corner, Virginia	2,444,648	N/A	4.21	16-Screens
Annapolis Mall	1,178,355	N/A	4.00	(# not known)
In Comparison with Recognized Standards:				
Urban Land Institute	Over 600,000		4.5	N / A

* Parking occupancy equals the number of occupied parking spaces divided by the total available spaces where Montgomery Mall currently has 5,557 parking spaces on site.

As shown in Table 1 above, regional shopping centers with over 1,000,000 sf gla have parking ratios below 4.5 because customers tend to park for a longer time period and spend more time shopping in these centers. These larger shopping centers have a wider range of different types of retail activities compared with the limited number of stores in the typical neighborhood shopping center.

Proposed Transit Facilities On Site

The existing transit center is located on the northwest side of the Mall with three bus bays, a layover area, and an adjacent commuter parking area with 250 spaces. The existing transit center is served by Metrobus routes J-1, J-2, J-3, & N-7 and Ride-On routes 6, 26, 38, 47, & 96. The transit center currently is experiencing the second highest ridership in the County for a non-Metro Station location. Twenty-eight buses per hour during peak period currently enter and exit the station. DPWT estimates that by 2025, the number of buses will increase to thirty-eight with no rail connection and forty-three buses with a future rail connection. The relocated transit center should have three more bus bays for a total of six bays to adequately serve the projected number of buses and their anticipated frequencies.

North Bethesda Transitway

The *Potomac Subregion Master Plan* and the *North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan* recommend designation of a 35-foot-wide right-of-way for a transitway on the south side of Westlake Terrace from the I-270 west spur to Westlake Drive with a station terminus on the mall property. The station was originally envisioned to be located in the northwest corner of the Mall. DPWT staff requested that the transit center be relocated in the northeast corner to provide a better connection to potential future Transitway/Metrorail link to northern Virginia along I-270 and I-495. As a result, the County does not require the 35-foot right of way transitway along Westlake Terrace from Motor City Drive to Westlake Drive.

The Mall was approved for an expansion in 1990 as a registered “loophole property” that included paying a required Transportation Improvements Fee. Part of that fund was used to design and construct the existing transit center as specified in the Local Area Transportation Review Exemption Agreement dated January 26, 1990. The new relocated transit center would be constructed by this applicant in the northeast corner of the site adjacent to I-270 as a master-planned element.

North Bethesda Transportation Management District (TMD)

This site is located within the boundary of the North Bethesda TMD but outside the North Bethesda/Garrett Park Planning Area. The applicant of this non-residential development would be required to submit a traffic mitigation plan for the North Bethesda TMD, pay the Transportation Management Fee (i.e., upon County Council re-establishment of that Fee), and participate in the following:

1. Conducting the employee surveys.
2. Appointing a transportation coordinator.
3. Promoting alternative transportation modes to employees on the site.

Participation of the applicant in this effort would assist them in achieving and maintaining the Stage II goal of 39% non-auto-driver mode share for employees (and 30% non-driver mode-share goal for multi-family residents) within the North Bethesda TMD boundary as recommended in the Master Plan. The Transportation Action Partnership, a private nonprofit organization, operates the North Bethesda TMD under contract to DPWT.

Master Plan Roadways and Bikeways

In accordance with the recommendations of *Potomac Subregion Master Plan*, the nearby roadways and bikeways are:

1. I-270 West Spur (along the east side of the site) is designated as a six-lane-divided freeway (F-1a) with a right-of-way width of 300 feet.
2. Democracy Boulevard (along the south side of the site) is designated as a six-lane-divided major highway (M-5) with a right-of-way width of 150 feet. Construction of a Class I

bikeway (SP-2) is recommended on this road in the May 2004 Planning Board Draft of the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan*.

3. Westlake Drive (to the west of the site) is designated as a four-lane arterial roadway (A-85) with a right-of-way width of 90 feet. A dual bikeway, DB-31 (shared use path and bike lanes) is recommended on this road in the May 2004 Planning Board Draft of the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan*. However, the County needs an additional ten feet of right-of-way from the west side in order to accommodate the bike lanes. In the interim, the applicant is required to build the shared-use path within the master-planned right-of-way along the property frontage and connections to Democracy Boulevard and Westlake Terrace.
4. Westlake Terrace (to the north of the site) is designated as a four-lane arterial roadway (A-85) with a right-of-way width of 90 feet. The May 2004 Planning Board Draft of the *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan* recommends bike lanes (BL-4) on both sides of the road. These bike lanes currently exist and the applicant will maintain them. Applicant will also upgrade the bike lane on the south side where it passes through the newly re-designed westernmost mall entrance as shown on the site plan, per agreement of M-NCPPC and DPWT.

Other On-Going Transportation Study

SHA's I-270/US 15 Major Investment Study is an on-going study on infrastructure improvements that includes non-single-occupancy-vehicle transportation mode facilities (i.e., HOT lanes, rapid bus lanes, etc.) from the Beltway (I-495) to the City of Frederick.

Site-Generated Traffic

Table 2 below gives the number of peak-hour trips generated by the existing regional shopping mall and its proposed expansion during the weekday morning peak-period (6:30 am to 9:30 am) and the evening peak-period (4:00 pm to 7:00 pm). Under the *Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines*, a traffic study was required to analyze the impact by the site-generated trips on the local transportation network because the existing and proposed expansion of this Mall would generate 30 or more peak-hour trips during the weekday morning and evening peak-periods. The submitted traffic study was analyzed for the proposed preliminary plan expansion of up to 500,000 sf gla that included 200,000 sf gla for a hotel.

TABLE 2: SITE-GENERATED PEAK-HOUR TRIPS

	Square Feet of Gross Leasable Area	Peak-Hour Trips			
		Morning		Evening	
		Total	New	Total	New
Existing Mall	1,244,648	1,120	1,042	4,107	3,409
Proposed Mall Expansion for the Site Plan	+300,000	270	251	990	882
Total after Site Plan Expansion	1,542,172	1,390	1,293	5,097	42,31
Proposed Mall Expansion/Hotel for the Preliminary Plan	+200,000	180	167	660	548
Proposed Mall/Site Plan & Hotel Expansion	+500,000	450	418	1,650	1,370
Total after Preliminary Plan Expansion	1,744,648	1,570	1,460	5,757	4,779

Total trips include the new trips as well as pass-by and diverted trips. New trips have their origins or destinations at the Mall, while pass-by and diverted trips have different origins and destinations. Pass-by trips occur along the same routes that stop at the Mall, while the diverted trips change their routes to travel to the Mall.

Permitted Hotel included in the Preliminary Plan Only

The County Council adopted Zoning Text Amendment No.04-20 effective December 14, 2004, that would permit a hotel as part of a regional shopping center in the C-2 zone. The peak-hour trips generated by 200,000 sf gla of a regional shopping center (i.e., shown on the 4th row of Table 2 above) is conservatively more than the peak-hour trips generated by a 247-room hotel, i.e., 138 and 146 peak-hour trips during the weekday morning and evening peak periods, respectively.

Congestion Levels at Nearby Intersections

The traffic study analyzed twelve nearby intersections to determine the impact of the site-generated trips on these intersections. The total traffic condition represents the site-generated trips added to the existing and background (i.e., trips from approved, but not-fully-built-out developments). The results of the congestion analysis is shown in Table 3 below with the applicable Critical Lane Volume (CLV) congestion standard and the calculated CLV values for each intersection during morning and evening peak hours.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF THE RESULTING CLV CONGESTION LEVELS

Intersections	CLV Congestion Standard	- Traffic Conditions					
		Morning Peak Hour			Evening Peak Hour		
		Existing	Background	Total	Existing	Background	Total
1. Tuckerman Lane/ Seven Locks Road	1,475 Potomac	1,452	1,535* 1,376 ¹	1,568* 1,409 ¹ 1,330 ²	1,411	1,496* 1,441 ¹	1,576* 1,521* ¹ 1,223 ²
2. Tuckerman Lane/ Westlake Drive	1,475 Potomac	1,134	1,155	1,164	1,164	1,210	1,256
3. Westlake Drive/ Westlake Terrace	1,475 Potomac	893	952	977	947	1,033	1,105
4. Westlake Terrace/ Auto Park Avenue-Mall Access	1,475 Potomac	392	429	465	604	662	720
5. Westlake Terrace/ Motor City Drive-Mall Access	1,475 Potomac	419	453	537	659	717	937
6. Fernwood Drive/ Rock Spring Drive	1,550 North Bethesda	620	620	655	645	645	821
7. Democracy Boulevard/ Seven Locks Road	1,475 Potomac	1,110	1,147	1,156 1,053 ³	1,439	1,500	1,542* 1,413 ³
8. Democracy Boulevard/ Westlake Drive	1,475 Potomac	893	921	942 984 ⁴	1,427	1,494*	1,576* 1,422 ⁴
9. Democracy Boulevard/ Mall Exit	1,475 Potomac	533	541	570	644	651	787
10. Democracy Boulevard/ I-270 West Spur SB Off-Ramp	1,475 Potomac	1,010	1,099 974 ⁵	1,123 998 ⁵	1,122	1,322 1,021 ⁵	1,447 1,146 ⁵
11a. Democracy Boulevard/ I-270 West Spur: NB Off-Ramp	1,550 North Bethesda	828	837	878	974	1,092	1,265
11b. Democracy Boulevard/ I-270 West Spur: NB Off-Ramp to EB Democracy Boulevard	1,550 North Bethesda	1,158	1,252	1,268	609	664	748
12. Democracy Boulevard/ Fernwood Drive	1,550 North Bethesda	1,040	1,072	1,105	1,286	1,327	1,411

Note: * indicates that the CLV value exceeds the congestion standard

¹ CLV calculation included the NB right-turn lane from Seven Locks Road that was required of previously approved Preliminary Plan No. 1-03029, Fortune Parc.

² CLV calculation included the proposed reconfiguration of the EB right-turn lane on Tuckerman Lane to a combination right-turn & through lane.

³ CLV calculation included the proposed NB & SB right-turn lanes from Seven Locks Road.

⁴ CLV calculation included the proposed reconfiguration of the 2-lane SB Westlake Drive lane use to have a right-turn lane only instead of a left-turn only lane.

⁵ CLV calculation included the 2nd WB left-turn lane from Democracy Boulevard that was required of previously approved Preliminary plan No. 1-98092, Rock Spring Centre.

The recommended improvements indicated with footnotes No. 2, 3, and 4, at three intersections provide additional capacity that would result in reducing the CLV values in the total traffic condition below the applicable CLV congestion standard of 1,475.

Non-Automobile Transportation Amenities

In accordance with Section VI, "Methods to Reduce Local Area Transportation Review Impacts" of the *Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines*, the non-automobile transportation amenities described in Recommendation No. 9 may be reduced from the site-generated peak-hour trips during the weekday morning and evening peak periods as follows:

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF NON-AUTOBOBILE TRANSPORTATION AMENITIES

Non-Auto Amenity	Number or Linear feet	Equivalent Vehicular Trips	Reduced Vehicular Trips
Covered Bus Shelters	6	10 per Shelter	60
Real-Time Transit Info	3	10 per Electronic Sign	30
Off-Site Sidewalks &/or Bikeway	Approximately 260	1 per 130 Linear feet	2
Transit Information Kiosks, if Built	3	5 per Stand	15
Taxicab Stands	3	2 per Stand	6
Weather-Protected Bike Racks, if Built	2	2 per Rack	4
Total			117

The reduction of 117 vehicular trips from the total site-generated trips is over the maximum of 60 trips recommended in the *Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines*. However, if the applicant did provide the amenities shown in Table 4, the Planning Board could decide to eliminate one of the three proposed intersection improvements described in Recommendation No.7 that was required to satisfy LATR. If so, the Planning Board's actions would be consistent with the County Council direction expressed in the *FY 2005 AGP*.

Policy Area Transportation Review

Policy Area Transportation Review is not applicable for the Potomac Policy Area because its development capacity is controlled by zoning, water and sewer constraints under the *FY 2005 AGP* and earlier versions of the *AGP*.

EA:CK:kcw
Attachments

cc: Anthony Alessi
Jim Agliata
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Larry Cole
Christina Contrersa
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