

ITEM #23

M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760
301-495-4500, www.mncppc.org

MCPB
Item No. 22
6-22-06

June 8, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Rick Hawthorne, Chief *DKH*
Transportation Planning Division

John Carter, Chief *JC*
Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor *DKH*
Transportation Planning
Countywide Planning Division

SUBJECT: **Mandatory Referral No. 06806-DPWT-1:** Redevelopment of surface public parking Lots 31 and 31A located at the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue in Bethesda, Maryland.

RECOMMENDATION: Transmit the following comments to the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT):

1. The disposition of public property at Lot 31 and Lot 31A and the location and use of the proposed joint public-private mixed-use redevelopment project is appropriate.
2. Continue to develop more detailed information regarding garage access point(s) capacity, design and operation for review by the Planning Board concurrently with the preliminary plan application for the joint public-private development. Further analysis must demonstrate how needs for both pedestrian and vehicular demands are accommodated.
3. Continue to review and develop more detailed information regarding the ultimate location, operation and alignment of the relocated Woodmont Avenue between Bethesda Avenue and Leland Street.

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4. Continue to communicate with all concerned parties, including adjacent property owners, residents, and recreational users of the Capital Crescent Trail regarding the proposed design and operation of Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue along the frontage of Lot 31/31A.

DISCUSSION

The Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) has submitted the referenced mandatory referral as part of a joint public/private development for Parking Lots 31 and 31A in the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). The site location is shown in Exhibit 1.

The mandatory referral request is related to an application for rezoning (Case No. G-850) and the abandonment of a portion of Woodmont Avenue (DPWT Docket No. AB 684). Exhibit 2 provides a concept plan for the overall public-private joint development project.

This mandatory referral submission is required for public review of those components of the public-private joint development project covered by Section 7-112 of the Regional District Act. Specifically, the mandatory referral submission for the public parking garage for Lot 31/31A is designed to address three components of the public-private joint development proposal:

- The disposition of public Lots 31 and 31A,
- The location and change of use for the publicly owned property, and
- The character, and extent of buildings, public roadways, and structures.

The private sector component of the proposed development project is also proceeding through the development approvals process, with a pending rezoning case to be followed by preliminary plan and site plan submissions.

Additional details regarding the mandatory referral submission are provided in the DPWT transmittal letter in Attachment A. Staff finds that, as described in Attachment A, the public and private components of the proposed development are well integrated and coordinated. The public garage is designed to accommodate public parking demand, most of which is independent of the private component, in a structure designed to achieve both public and private component objectives. The continued integration of both public and private components is being addressed by a public component review in conjunction with the private approval process.

Staff therefore finds that this mandatory referral public hearing can adequately address the disposition of public property at Lots 31 and 31A, the change of use for the current public parking lots, and the location of the parking garage. Comments on the character, and extent of the public garage may need refinement at such time as the County provides more developed information on the traffic study and analysis, the ultimate geometric configuration of the surrounding roadways, the access to the recreational trail and overall integration into the development of this section of downtown Bethesda. The County has agreed to bring additional information when developed to the Planning Board for review and comment, as indicated in Attachment B.

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From the perspective of addressing the property disposition, location and change of use, staff finds the April 20, 2006 mandatory referral submission to be complete. From the perspective of addressing character, and extent of parking structures, the April 20, 2006 mandatory referral submission will be supplemented by additional information to satisfy (LATR). Staff continue to coordinate with both private and public sector applicants regarding LATR details, particularly concerning intersection design, traffic controls and operational efficiency, as well as the proposed designs for the garage points of access. The completeness of the remaining submission materials will be confirmed pending any requirements placed on the site by the County Council during the rezoning process.

Property Disposition

Staff finds that the disposition of property for Lot 31 and Lot 31A is appropriate as the transfer of property is an element supporting the joint use of the property to achieve both residential development and transportation objectives in the 1994 Sector Plan. The Planning Board approved a similar development at the Galaxy site in south Silver Spring. For the Galaxy site, the developer converted Lot 13, a surface lot owned by the County, into a public parking garage under a privately owned, mixed-use development.

Woodmont Avenue Realignment

The application submission for the mandatory referral indicates that the realignment of Woodmont Avenue is part of the application. Staff finds that for the Woodmont Avenue realignment, the change of use and location are addressed through the abandonment process (case #AB 684, being reviewed concurrently). Under Section 7-112 of the Regional District Act, mandatory referrals include relocation and abandonment cases.

The staff recommendation on AB 684 specifies that the recommendation for abandonment is contingent upon subsequent Planning Board preliminary plan approval for the private sector development and plat recordation. Therefore, the remainder of this memorandum addresses the public parking garage.

Garage Description

The applicant proposes to construct a multi-story underground parking garage of approximately 1,480 spaces, some 340 of which will be reserved for private use by tenants of the residential units within the mixed-use development. The precise number of spaces will be determined during final design of the facility. The garage will be located entirely below ground on five levels of structured parking. The applicant proposes to include features within the garage to allow for simplified access for patrons and to encourage the use of the garage by cyclists and other recreational users of the nearby Capital Crescent Trail.

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Access and Circulation

Access to the garage is proposed from two points: one along Woodmont Avenue and one along Bethesda Avenue. Both entrances would be located towards the eastern portion of the site, with full movements at both locations. The design includes provision of a bicycle loading/unloading zone on Woodmont Avenue towards the southern portion of the site, with access to the Capital Crescent Trail via a connecting walkway.

The Woodmont Avenue garage entrance is proposed to be located approximately 300 feet south of Bethesda Avenue and approximately 50 feet north of Miller Avenue. The private portion of the joint public-private development application proposes to extend the existing Woodmont Avenue median south of the site by approximately 50 feet to restrict both Miller Avenue and Leland Avenue to right-in, right-out movements along Woodmont Avenue.

The garage entry and exit points include four inbound and three outbound gates, designed to accommodate an estimated 1,150 vehicles during the busiest hour of the day. The traffic flow is expected to be distributed roughly evenly between the two garage access points and between entering and exiting traffic. To the south and east of their common intersection, Woodmont Avenue currently has a peak hour volume of approximately 900 vehicles per hour, and Bethesda Avenue currently has a peak hour volume of approximately 530 vehicles per hour.

For comparison purposes, Garage 60 (Wayne-Ellsworth) in Silver Spring, opened in autumn 2004, has a total of 1,690 spaces and two points of access (a full-movement access onto Wayne Avenue and an entrance-only from the Ellsworth Avenue alley). East of Georgia Avenue, Wayne Avenue currently has a peak hour volume of approximately 1,200 vehicles per hour.

Staff notes that concerns have been expressed regarding the traffic operations associated with the garage points of access and egress to Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues. Based on material submitted to date, staff concludes that the garage access points can be designed to operate effectively. As described in the subsequent section on LATR, however, staff cannot yet make a definitive finding to address concerns regarding operations, as several operational elements regarding intersection geometric design and traffic control have not yet been definitively proposed.

For all development accessing County roads, the operational elements, including traffic control and sight distance, are typically under the purview of DPWT. Staff recommends that DPWT continue outreach to parties of interest during detailed design studies and return to the Planning Board for review and comment on access and circulation details developed as part of those studies.

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Local Area Transportation Review

According to the LATR Guidelines, the applicant is required to submit an LATR study detailing the estimated number of peak hour trips generated by the proposed development. As this is a mixed-use development, the number of trips accorded includes both those trips assigned to the residential and commercial elements, as well as anticipated patrons of the public parking garage¹. Staff devised the scope of study to address the entirety of the development proposal as one project, reflective of the nature of its design. Given that both proposed driveways will serve all aspects of the development (residents, employees and patrons of the retail space and recreational users of the trail), staff elected to consolidate the estimated traffic volumes into one study.

To date, the applicant has not yet satisfactorily addressed staff questions and comments regarding the estimated traffic impact and analysis of the public garage components of the LATR study. Staff will continue to work with the applicant as the review of the submitted study continues.

Transportation Planning Staff has specific outstanding concerns relating to the:

- Precise number of peak hour trips associated with the public parking component of the garage,
- Geometric configuration of Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues in the vicinity of the proposed garage entrance,
- Ultimate geometric and operational design for the intersection of Woodmont Avenue at Bethesda Avenue, in particular with respect to pedestrian access
- Proposed access and operation for patrons of the recreational trail, especially with respect to turning movements along Woodmont Avenue, and
- Provision/elimination of on street parking in the vicinity of the site, with its related impact upon roadway access and operations.

The preliminary conclusions of the LATR study submitted indicate that for total future traffic conditions, and including several design alternatives, the list of studied intersections, including the garage access points, will have calculated Critical Lane Volumes (CLV) of less than the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD) Policy Area congestion standard of 1,800 CLV. It is likely that upon resolution of the outstanding staff concerns noted above, the calculated CLV for the studied intersections will not exceed the 1,800 CLV threshold. This is staff's anticipation due to the variation in trip generation estimates being too low to mathematically cause the CLV volumes at any of the study area intersections to exceed the standard. Furthermore, the final plans for the ultimate roadway geometry of Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues remain under the purview of the APF Ordinance to be applied at the time of preliminary plan review and approval.

¹ The applicant has presented the new public parking garage as a means to meet parking demand from existing, approved, or pending development within the Bethesda CBD. Therefore, all of the trips assigned to the public parking garage were "redirected" from adjacent and surrounding developments with identified on-site parking shortages. No "new" trips were assigned to the public parking garage.

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Master Plan Consistency

The mandatory referral process requires an examination of the use, location, extent, grade, and character of any proposed change in public use or construction of public structures. Staff finds that the **use and location** of the proposed mixed-use development including the public parking garage is **consistent** with the 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan.

The 1994 Sector Plan implementation chapter includes an estimate that a total of 700 public parking spaces might be provided on the Lot 31 site. This estimate is based more on an assessment of structural feasibility than on a site-specific analysis of demand, as the same chapter indicates a need for DPWT to acquire additional CBD properties to provide 500 public parking spaces at unspecified locations.

Staff finds that the **extent** of parking proposed on the Lot 31/31A site can be arguably considered consistent with the literal descriptions available in the Sector Plan, but that additional investigation regarding the implications of garage size need to be considered, as described below.

Concerns Regarding Extent of the Proposed Garage

The garage is proposed to contain approximately 1,160 public parking spaces, more than envisioned in the 1994 Sector Plan, as described above. The concerns regarding the number of public spaces can be summarized in four types:

Urban Design

Will the size of the parking garage adversely affect the urban design of the neighborhood? In this case, the entire garage will be below grade, so no urban design issues are associated with the size of the garage.

Traffic Congestion

Will the size of the parking garage adversely affect traffic congestion? From the perspective of Local Area Transportation Review, staff finds that the proposed number of 1,160 public parking spaces at this site will not cause intersections in the traffic impact study area to exceed the 1,800 CLV standard of the Bethesda CBD Policy Area. Further information is needed, however, to evaluate potential traffic control measures at the proposed garage entrances and at the intersection of Bethesda and Woodmont Avenues.

Mode Share Goals

Will the size of the parking garage adversely affect achievement of the broader public transportation goals of the Bethesda CBD? The 1994 Sector Plan recommends managing the extent of total long-term parking capacity in the CBD as one of the measures to limit traffic congestion. The Sector Plan's 37% non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) goal for CBD employees is integrated with the management of long-term parking spaces.

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The Sector Plan contains a staging plan that manages the phasing of development with public facilities. The Plan recommends a Stage I NADMS goal of 32%, midway between the 27% observed in the early 1990s and the 37% end-state goal. Achievement of the Stage I NADMS goal was one of the six criteria examined by the Planning Board when it voted to move from Stage I to Stage II during April 2004. The NADMS is reported in the Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) biennial reports. During the 2002 and 2003 surveys, the observed NADMS was 34%, and the 2004 survey showed an NADMS of 35%, indicating continued progress from the Stage I goal of 32% toward the Sector Plan goal of 37%.

DPWT has estimated that a demand exists for 1,349 public parking spaces at Lot 31/31A based upon a survey done by KPMG consultants in 2000, adjusted for subsequent approved or pending developments in the area; including Bethesda Row, Woodmont West, Woodmont East, the Jennings Parcel, the Greenberg Development site, and the Reed Street site. This demand also reflects the 279 spaces currently existing at Lot 31/31A.

Staff finds that parking demand for a substantial public investment should also consider needs beyond currently envisioned development projects. The 1994 Sector Plan envisioned that approximately 28,750 total parking spaces would be appropriate to accommodate envisioned development. During winter 2004, BTS conducted a comprehensive survey of public and private parking spaces and determined that there were approximately 23,164 total spaces available for long-term commercial parking in the CBD.

Staff is unaware of any significant changes to the private parking inventory constructed during the past two years. The Arlington East property will be providing 224 parking spaces for commercial use in their private garage structure. The May 2006 Bethesda CBD pipeline of approved but unbuilt commercial properties contains only 6,000 square feet of office space, so no further substantial changes to the private parking inventory are foreseen.

The comparison of alternative parking capacity estimates is complicated by two factors:

- Some references (including the BTS report) explicitly describe reservation of spaces for long-term use only, while the references to long-term parking demand in other references (such as the 1994 Sector Plan) are only implicit. The BTS parking inventory identified 4,376 total spaces explicitly reserved for short-term use. The Sector Plan recommends providing an adequate parking supply for retail and service business customers, but does not provide quantitative guidance regarding adequacy.
- The use of informal parking spaces was not included in the Sector Plan evaluation of parking needs. The BTS parking inventory identified 1,920 informal spaces (residences converted to businesses, alleys, backyards, driveways, etc.) that were included in the total estimate of 23,164 long-term CBD spaces.
- Parking spaces reserved exclusively for residential uses in the CBD are not reflected in either the Sector Plan or BTS evaluations (other than those that are incorporated in the BTS inventory of informal spaces made available for commercial use).

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Staff finds that the appropriate comparison for CBD parking management is the 23,164 long-term spaces identified in the BTS parking inventory to the 27,850 spaces recommended in the Sector Plan and implicitly assumed to reflect long-term parking demand. The 1,160 public spaces (of which some may be limited to short-term use only) therefore would not exceed the Sector Plan recommended parking totals.

Feasibility and Affordability

Will the size of the parking garage be feasible and affordable? Like most commodities, as parking garages increase in size, they generally become more cost-effective on a per-unit basis from both capital and operating cost perspectives, when the cost of real estate is factored into the equation. The DPWT Request for Proposals reflected the County's position regarding feasibility and affordability by requiring all applicants to commit to providing at least 1,150 public parking spaces. Sitting a public garage under a mixed-use private development enables the public sector to leverage the land value to make efficient use of developable properties in a CBD setting.

Prior Planning Board Actions

The Planning Board viewed the Lot 31 Redevelopment Proposal Pre-Preliminary Plan (#720060150) as a discussion item on January 19, 2006. At the time of the Planning Board presentation, the applicant provided conceptual diagrams and illustrations in support of the project proposal. Staff made no comment at that time and the Planning Board provided no guidance to the applicant.

Public Outreach

The joint public-private development proposal is the result of an open competition by Montgomery County government for the opportunity to develop this project. Public meetings were held as part of the selection process at the Bethesda Services Center. The public process also included meetings were with adjacent property owners.

Environmental Impacts

This site is located in a highly urban area that was developed before the Planning Board's Environmental Guidelines were adopted. It is not located within a Special Protection Area or Primary Management Area. This site has no steep slopes, or erodible soils. There are no wetlands or stream buffers on site.

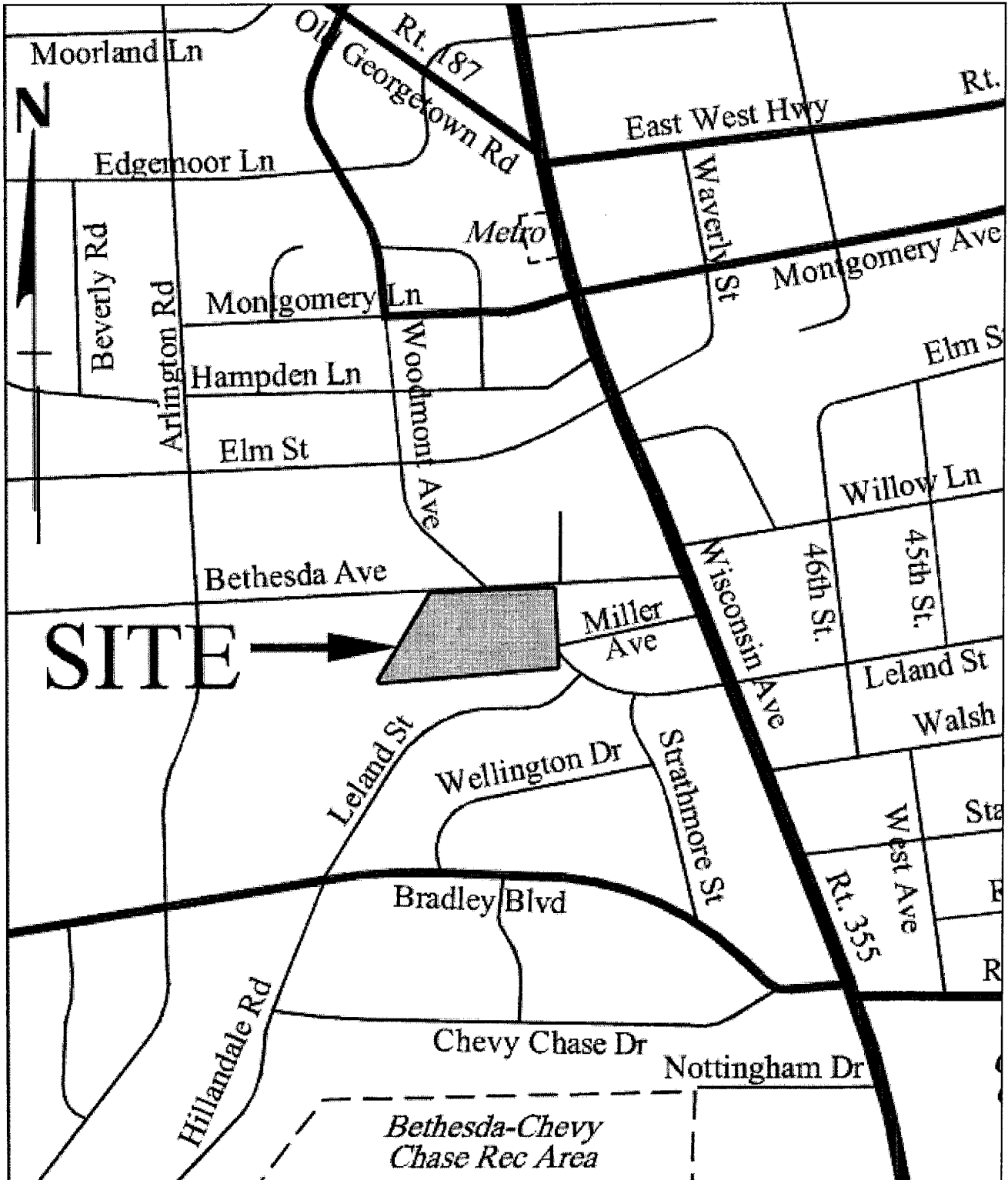
Further development of traffic circulation plans should consider the air quality impacts attributable to vehicular queuing. Additional environmental concerns for the joint public-private development include the preparation of a traffic noise impact analysis, a final Forest Conservation Plan, and a Tree Save plan, all to be included in the preliminary plan submission.

DKH:gw
Attachments

mno to MCPB re Lot 31 06806-DPWT-1

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Exhibit 1. Lot 31/31A Site Location





DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Director

April 20, 2006

Mr. Derick Berlage, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Mandatory Referral Submission – Disposition of interests in land under
Parking Lots 31 and 31A; construction of new Public Parking Garage 31;
and realignment of portion of Woodmont Avenue

Dear Mr. Berlage:

I am pleased to submit to you plans for i) disposition of surface parking lots 31 and 31A in the Bethesda Parking Lot District, ii) a new public parking garage 31 to be located below grade (the “Proposed Public Parking Garage”); and iii) realignment of Woodmont Avenue between Bethesda Avenue and Miller Avenue. This submission is being made pursuant to Section 7-112 of Article 28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

The subject property for this mandatory referral application consists of Lots 31 and 31A (both currently serving as surface public parking lots), located south of Bethesda Avenue and east and west of existing Woodmont Avenue, and also includes the public right-of-way of Woodmont Avenue that separates Lots 31 and 31A, all as shown on Attachment 1 (the “Property”). The Proposed Public Parking Garage will be constructed below grade over the entire Property and will be owned by the County and will be a part of the Bethesda Parking Lot District (“PLD”). It is currently contemplated that the Proposed Public Parking Garage will utilize a pay on foot system and will be open to the public in substantially the same manner as other PLD parking facilities.

Lots 31 and 31A are being disposed of as part of a joint public/private redevelopment of the Property. The public project will include a new Public Parking Garage 31. Additionally while the realignment of a portion of Woodmont Avenue through the project is included in this mandatory referral submission, it will be constructed as part of the private redevelopment along with an above-grade private mixed use residential and commercial project that will include a high level of affordable and workforce housing and abundant on- and off-site public use space and amenities (the “Private Mixed Use Project”). The private purchaser of the surface lots and development rights and the developer of the Private Mixed Use Project is Lot 31 Associates LLC



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(the "Private Developer") comprised of affiliates of Stonebridge Associates and PN Hoffman.

As further discussed below and as shown on the concept plan attached hereto, the Proposed Public Parking Garage will have approximately 1,138 public parking spaces (the exact number will be determined through final design of the facility), with two points of vehicular access to Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue. Stairways and elevators at multiple locations will be strategically located to provide easy pedestrian access to and from the garage. Vehicular access to the parking areas will utilize a single control point, with adequate available stacking distances within the garage to ensure no queuing of cars into the public streets.

The Private Mixed-Use Project will be comprised of street level retail, residential dwellings in two buildings, including provision of moderately priced dwelling units (MPDU) on-site in accordance with Chapter 25A of the County Code, and 35 additional "affordable" dwelling units targeted as "workforce housing." The integrated access and coordination of the Private Mixed-Use Project with the Proposed Public Parking Garage will ensure an attractive development of the air rights, a strong relationship of the vehicular and pedestrian means of ingress and egress to existing roadways and the Capital Crescent Trail adjacent to the Property, and a development program in conformance with the recommendations of the Approved and Adopted Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan (the "Sector Plan"). The proposed Private Mixed-Use Project is the subject of a pending zoning application, Zoning Application No. G-850, requesting TS-M (transit station, mixed-use) zoning of the Property. Because of the relationship between the Proposed Public Parking Garage, the realignment of Woodmont Avenue, and the Private Mixed-Use Project, we are making this mandatory referral submission at this time to allow the Montgomery County Planning Board to consider the mandatory referral concurrent with the Planning Board's review and recommendation of the TS-M zoning application for the Property. While the processes for the mandatory referral application and the application to apply the TS-M zone are separate and quite different, the concurrent presentation of the two projects allows a complete understanding of treatment of the entire site and for each to be considered in the context of the other.

Realignment of Woodmont Avenue

As part of the design process for the Proposed Public Parking Garage, it has been determined that Woodmont Avenue, south of Bethesda Avenue, should be aligned slightly to the west. While the realignment of the portion of Woodmont Avenue between Bethesda Avenue and Miller Avenue is part of this mandatory referral submission, the actual treatment, streetscaping and construction of the realigned portion of Woodmont Avenue will be performed by the Private Developer and will be included in the development application for the Private Mixed Use Project.

Realignment of the road will accomplish two significant public policy objectives: 1) realigning Woodmont Avenue will create a vastly improved intersection at Bethesda Avenue with far better pedestrian and vehicular circulation and safety; and 2) the relocation of the road will permit two points of ingress and egress for the Proposed Public Parking Garage, one on Bethesda Avenue and one on Woodmont Avenue, at points located away from the intersection of

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Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue. These points of ingress and egress will allow optimal efficiency and operation of the Proposed Public Parking Garage and will be located as far away from the intersection as possible to further enhance public safety and improve operational functioning of the Proposed Public Parking Garage.

A petition for temporary road closure and abandonment to facilitate the proposed realignment of Woodmont Avenue and the resulting disposition and reuse of the existing right-of-way has been filed with the Montgomery County Executive and has been designated Abandonment Case No. AB684. A new 80-foot public right-of-way for realigned Woodmont Avenue will be created by Montgomery County prior to the conveyance of the Property to the Private Developer and the commencement of construction on the Property. The Private Developer will construct the realigned roadway in full conformance with County road standards and the streetscape requirements established in the Sector Plan. The formal abandonment of the existing Woodmont Avenue will occur at the time of final subdivision approval, after the new right-of-way is established by appropriate legal document(s).

The Proposed Public Parking Garage

The Proposed Public Parking Garage will provide up to 1,138 public parking spaces. This will be contained in a four and a half level, below-grade parking structure, with a point of ingress/egress on the east side of realigned Woodmont Avenue away from the intersection of Bethesda Avenue and a separate means of ingress/egress on the south side of Bethesda Avenue, also away from the intersection.

Two separate means of ingress/egress to the Proposed Public Parking Garage are critical from an operational standpoint for a garage of this size and magnitude. Through the realignment of Woodmont Avenue, these points of ingress/egress are able to be organized in a manner that permits a single control point serving the two points of ingress/egress with stacking lanes in excess of 90 feet to protect against the possibility of any queuing of vehicles out to the public roads or in conflict with pedestrians crossing the garage driveways at the surface level.

The parking garage structure will contain approximately 340 additional spaces which will be paid for and owned by the Private Developer for purposes of satisfying parking demands as part of the residential development component of the Private Mixed-Use Project. These spaces will be constructed pursuant to the same design standards as the public parking garage. The County is expected to grant an easement for use of its public parking drive aisles and driveways for access to the private spaces.

The layout of the parking garage is extremely efficient in terms of construction and in allowing vehicles to circulate and easily find parking, and the design is also very safe for pedestrians circulating to and from their cars to the elevators and stairwells serving the garage. There will be six (6) elevators and stairwell areas serving the Proposed Public Parking Garage, allowing motorists to exit by foot from the garage at safe locations along Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue and to thereafter conveniently access destinations within this portion of the

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Bethesda CBD. Because it is anticipated that the Proposed Public Parking Garage will be heavily used by motorists bringing bicycles to utilize the adjacent Capital Crescent Trail, four (4) of the elevators are oversized to comfortably allow the transport of bicycles from the Proposed Public Parking Garage to the trail systems that exist and that are proposed to accentuate the use of the Capital Crescent Trail. It is also important to note that a surface level bicycle drop off area across from the Woodmont Avenue garage entrance (on the western side of Woodmont Avenue) is being provided with the Private Mixed-Use Project to allow motorists to also drop bicycles off before entering the garage. This drop-off area will connect to the Capital Crescent Trail through a trail and public amenity space along the southern side of the Property, while also providing direct pedestrian and bicycle linkage to the streetscape along Woodmont and Bethesda Avenues and the rest of the CBD. With this drop-off also located away from the intersection of Bethesda and Woodmont Avenue, DPWT views this as an extremely important design consideration for the overall Joint Redevelopment Project.

To minimize any potential negative impacts of the Proposed Public Parking Garage on the surrounding community, easements will be granted to the County and the exhaust shafts that provide good air quality within the garage will extend through the garage and vent at the rooftop levels of the Private Mixed-Use Project buildings. The Proposed Public Parking Garage driveways will be improved at street level in accordance with the streetscape standards for the Bethesda CBD as set forth in the Sector Plan, with appropriate paving to distinguish pedestrian crossings of the driveways.

Because the Proposed Public Parking Garage extends beneath the future realigned Woodmont Avenue, the structural makeup of the parking garage has been the subject of significant attention. The realigned road, to be contained within a volumetric easement that will be created for the new 80-foot public right-of-way, is essentially designed as a bridge structure. Appropriate assurances are being put in place to require inspections of the structural supports by trained and experienced inspectors and to provide mechanisms for repairs and routine maintenance to protect the integrity of both the garage structure and the road structure.

Sector Plan Compliance

The Sector Plan specifically recommends the redevelopment of Lot 31 with a public private joint development project including an underground public parking structure and an above-ground mixed-use development. While the Sector Plan did not specifically envision the inclusion of Lot 31A and the public right-of-way in this redevelopment, the inclusion is necessary to achieve the construction of the public parking garage to the size determined by DPWT and to eliminate a small remaining surface lot with limited urban development options. The joinder of these public properties, Lots 31 and 31A and Woodmont Avenue, allow for a more optimal urban planning approach to these properties. The disposition of the parking lots, the resulting Proposed Public Parking Garage and the realigned Woodmont Avenue (which itself addresses the Sector Plan recommended need to improve the pedestrian and vehicular circulation at the intersection of Bethesda and Woodmont Avenue) and the Private Mixed-Use Project, are

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not only consistent with, but also exceed the public policy objectives, goals and recommendations of the Sector Plan.

Transportation Review

To ensure that the Proposed Public Parking Garage will operate efficiently, a transportation analysis has been prepared which reviews future anticipated traffic impacts to the local road network. This analysis utilizes two review methodologies: 1) the typical local area transportation review utilizing the critical lane volume ("CLV") methodologies set forth in the LATR Guidelines adopted by the County for traffic evaluations pursuant to the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance; and 2) modeling the proposed impacts using a computer software program known as SYNCHRO-SIM Traffic Analysis. The CLV methodology essentially measures the levels of service of nearby intersections with existing traffic, background traffic for projects approved but not yet built and the proposed traffic that will be generated by the Proposed Public Parking Garage. The SYNCHRO-SIM traffic model is a computer generated simulation designed to demonstrate how the local links, points of ingress/egress and intersections will operate from a delay and efficiency standpoint based upon existing and projected future conditions with the addition of the Proposed Public Parking Garage.

It is important to note that the traffic anticipated to be generated by the Proposed Public Parking Garage is largely already accounted for through traffic analyses conducted by the existing or approved but un-built private development projects in the area that will rely upon public parking rather than on-site private parking and through existing demand that already occurs in this area but is underserved by the current supply of public parking in this area. The traffic analyses have attempted to make reasonable redistributions of traffic based upon vehicles utilizing the new parking garage, while also factoring in the existing traffic patterns in the area. As is further explained in the transportation analysis submitted with this mandatory review application, the LATR analysis utilizing the CLV methodology shows that all intersections studied in the vicinity of the proposed parking garage operate at acceptable levels of service as defined by the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. Additionally, the SYNCHRO-SIM traffic modeling reveals that the Proposed Public Parking Garage will function adequately, efficiently, and safely at points of ingress and egress to Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue.

Other

The Proposed Public Parking Garage will be paid for by the County, subject to appropriation of funds by the Montgomery County Council. Parking Lots 31 and 31A will be sold, and the Proposed Public Parking Garage will be developed pursuant to the terms of a general development agreement between the County and the Private Developer. The general development agreement will also provide for a significant commitment to affordable housing to include statutory MPDU requirements, workforce housing units and monetary contribution to provide affordable housing. The ownership relationship of the Proposed Public Parking Garage and the Private Mixed-Use Project will be through a condominium regime. The Private Mixed-

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Use Project will be required to incorporate the realignment of Woodmont Avenue and the design, structure, access and all other physical and operational components of the Proposed Public Parking Garage.

The Proposed Public Parking Garage will be constructed as the first phase of the joint development. The build-out of the Joint Development Project will be a continuous, single phase process, and the Proposed Public Parking Garage will be opened to the public at such time that the County determines it to be safe, code-compliant and protected from ongoing construction activities with the remainder of the Joint Development Project. Woodmont Avenue will be closed for a period of approximately twenty-one (21) months to permit the garage structure and relocated Woodmont Avenue to be constructed. It is anticipated that construction will commence in mid-2008, with realigned Woodmont Avenue reopened to traffic in spring 2010 and the garage open to public use several months later.

There will be no impacts to public parkland or land owned by M-NCPPC, with only existing public surface parking and the referenced section of Woodmont Avenue south of Bethesda Avenue being disturbed. It is however anticipated that users of the Capital Crescent Hiker/Biker Trail will use the Proposed Public Parking Garage and as described above, the design of the facility takes that fact into consideration, by providing certain bicycle friendly features. The Proposed Public Parking Garage will be sub-surface and will not be LEED Certified.

In accordance with Section III of the Mandatory Referral Guidelines, and in addition to this written narrative (1), DPWT has provided the following in support of this mandatory referral submission (or explains below why submission requirements are inapplicable):

1. General Location Map, and Certified Vicinity Zoning Map Plan and Site and Surrounding Area Plan (Section III(2));
2. Mandatory Referral Site Plan (Section III(3));
3. Utilities and Right-of-Way Map (Section III(4));
4. Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation Plan (Section III(5));
5. NRI/FSD (Section III(6));
6. Letter from DPS regarding Water Quality Plan/SPA requirements (Section III(7)) — is not required since the Property is not within a designated Special Protection Area;
7. Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan (Section III(8));
8. Topographic Map – Included in General Location Map and Mandatory Referral Site Plan and Utilities Plan (Section III(9));
9. Preliminary Stormwater Management Concept Plan (Section III(10));
10. Landscape and Lighting Plan (Section III(11)) — will be included in Site Plan for the Private Mixed-Use Project;
11. Overall Concept Development Plan (including Private Mixed-Use Project) (Section III(12));

ITEM #23

Derick Berlage, Chairman
April 20, 2006
Page 7 of 7

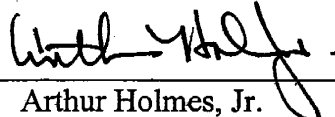
12. Statement of Compliance with County Noise Ordinance (Section III(13)) — the Proposed Public Parking Garage will comply with Section 31B of the Montgomery County Code and the Park and Planning Noise Guidelines;
13. Architectural Schematics for Levels B1-B5 of Proposed Public Parking Garage (14 pages) (Section III(14));
14. Traffic Impact Statement (containing a traffic study for the Proposed Public Parking Garage and Preliminary Traffic Control Plans for construction, and also, for informational purposes only, a traffic study for the Private Mixed-Use Project) (Section III(15));
15. Garage Circulation Review Report (Section III(5) – Parking Circulation); and
16. Exhibits for Closure/Abandonment of Woodmont Avenue (For Reference).

The Proposed Public Parking Garage is entirely underground, therefore, with the exception of the driveways at the surface level, there is little to review from an above-grade architectural standpoint relevant to this mandatory referral review process. As indicated above, the portions of the Proposed Public Parking Garage at the surface level, *i.e.*, the driveways, will be designed in accordance with the Sector Plan streetscape requirements. While significant details relating to the Proposed Public Parking Garage are being provided, to assist in the review of this mandatory referral application in proper context, considerable additional information relating to the Private Mixed-Use Project is also being provided for informational purposes only and where provided is indicated to be part of the Private Mixed-Use Project.

There has been significant public input into this process already. The Private Developer has conducted several public meetings relative to the Joint Redevelopment Project. There is also an additional public forum scheduled for April 24, 2006, where the Proposed Public Parking Garage will be presented by the County concurrent with a presentation and discussion of the Private Mixed-Use Project by the Private Developers (and the proposed abandonment/closure and realignment of Woodmont Avenue).

We appreciate your consideration and hope that the Planning Board will find the Proposed Public Parking Garage, as currently designed, to be satisfactory and consistent with relevant land use and planning considerations. We look forward to presenting this to the Montgomery County Planning Board.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION

By: 

Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Director

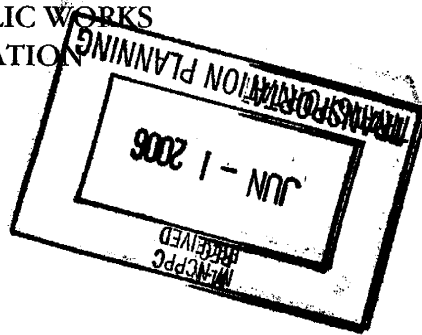


DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORTATION

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Director

May 25, 2006



Mr. Daniel Hardy
Transportation Planning Supervisor
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

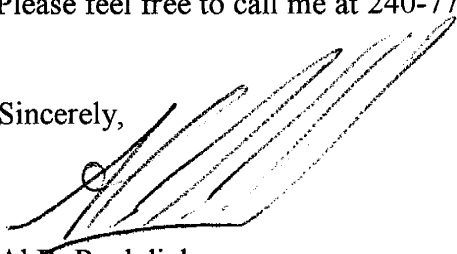
Re: Mandatory Referral Application for Lot 31/31A Public Garage and Realignment
of Woodmont Avenue

Dear Mr. Hardy:

I am writing to you in connection with the County's Mandatory Referral submission made on April 20, 2006, for the redevelopment of Lots 31 and 31A with a new below-grade public parking garage and the realignment of a portion of Woodmont Avenue. I understand that you would like more information on the traffic impacts associated with the public parking garage and the realigned Woodmont Avenue. Comments on the location, character, and extent of the public garage may need refinement at such time as the County provides more developed information on the traffic study and analysis. Traffic studies are underway. When the analysis of traffic impacts is better developed, I would be happy to present this information to the Planning Board for it to review and to receive any comments it has relating to off-site traffic impacts from the public parking garage.

I hope this addresses your concerns. Please feel free to call me at 240-777-6008 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Al R. Roshdiah
Chief

cc: Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director, DPWT



Division of Operations