**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: January 21, 2005  
 TO: Montgomery County Planning Board  
 Rose Krasnow, Chief  
 Michael Ma, Supervisor  
 Development Review Division  
 FROM: Michael Ma, Supervisor  
 (301) 495-4523

REVIEW TYPE: **Site Plan Review**  
 CASE #: **8-05003**  
 PROJECT NAME: **Westfield Shoppingtown Montgomery, Parcel A**  
 APPLYING FOR: Approval of 1,542,172 square feet of commercial retail space, including 300,000 square feet of new space for retail, restaurant, and theater uses.

REVIEW BASIS: Section C-4.351 of the Zoning Ordinance requires site plan review for a development containing a building that exceeds 42 feet in height.

ZONE: C-2  
 LOCATION: Northeast quadrant of the intersection of Democracy Boulevard and West Lake Drive

MASTER PLAN: Potomac Subregion  
 APPLICANT: Montgomery Mall LLC, SRC O P Corp., and May Department Stores Company

FILING DATE: August 2, 2004  
 HEARING DATE: January 27, 2005



**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approval of 1,542,172 gross leasable square feet of commercial retail space, including 300,000 square feet of new space for retail, restaurant, and theater uses on 57.24 acres, and Approval of a Parking Waiver to allow a parking ratio of 4.5 spaces for each 1,000 gross leasable square feet with the following conditions:

1. Preliminary Plan Conformance  
The proposed development shall comply with the conditions of approval for Preliminary Plan 1-05018.
2. Site Design  
Provide a transit center design in accordance with Condition 7.

3. Landscaping

- a. Provide a landscaped strip, at least 2 to 3 feet in width, between the ring road and the proposed parking structures.
- b. Provide details of the proposed planters to be used for trees on the top of the parking structure.
- c. Provide street trees along the street frontages of Democracy Boulevard and Westlake Drive with consistent spacing and species.
- d. Provide required trees and evergreen hedge within the landscaping strip between the parking facilities and public streets.
- e. Show the proposed sidewalks and shared paths on the Landscape Plan.
- f. Provide additional landscaped islands within the parking lot near the proposed Hecht's Home store.
- g. Reduce the spacing of the proposed trees along the driveway around the new parking lot near Westlake Terrace.
- h. Provide trees along the storefront across driveway from the parking structures.
- i. Plant shrub EK 3 to 4 feet on center, PL 24-36 inches in height, and TD 4 feet on center.
- j. Consider replacing tree FP with other species.

4. Lighting

- a. All light fixtures shall be full cut-off fixtures.
- b. Deflectors shall be installed on all fixtures causing potential glare or excess illumination, especially on the perimeter fixtures abutting the adjacent residential properties.
- c. Reduce the height of the light poles, which are to be located on the top level of the proposed parking structure near Westlake Drive, to minimize the impact of excess illumination on adjacent residential properties.
- d. The height of the light poles shall not exceed 30 feet including the mounting base.
- e. Revise the lighting design for Zone 5 to (i) meet the operational need of the proposed transit center, and (ii) minimize potential glare and excess illumination on I-270.

5. Pedestrian Circulation

- a. Provide a safe and convenient pedestrian path between the proposed transit center and the mall entrances.
- b. Provide adequate width for the proposed sidewalk along the storefront.
- c. All mall driveways shall provide ADA compatible pedestrian access between perimeter county roads and internal mall entries.
- d. Provide a Public Improvements Easement (PIE), if necessary, along the Westlake Terrace frontage to accommodate the required sidewalk construction. The easement shall be recorded in the Land Records of Montgomery County, with the Liber and Folio referenced on the record plat.

6. Transportation

The applicant shall comply with the following conditions of approval from M-NCPPC-Transportation Planning in the memorandum dated January 21, 2005:

- a. Total development under the subject site plan is limited to 1,542,172 gross leasable square feet.

- b. Show right-of-way dedication 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.
- c. 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 I-270 West Spur. Make a good faith effort to negotiate with the adjoining property owner of the automobile filling station located to the southwest 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.
- d. 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.
- e. Upgrade the existing bike lanes on south side of Westlake Terrace at the Mall access point/Auto Park Avenue where the existing eastbound right-turn lane is to be reconstructed.
- f. Construct seven-foot-wide concrete sidewalks along Westlake Terrace from Westlake Drive to the east side of the Mall access point/Motor City Drive.
- g. Prior to release of any building permit for the proposed development, the applicant shall enter into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement (TMA) with the Planning Board and DPWT 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 its traffic mitigation goal for Stage 2 of 39% non-auto-driver mode share for employees.
- h. Prior to release of any building permit for the proposed development, the applicant shall modify the Memoranda of Understanding starting in 1984 with subsequent amendments with the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) to provide 300 off-site employees' parking spaces during the peak holiday shopping period from Thanksgiving to Christmas.

7. Transit Center

The applicant shall relocate the existing on-site transit facility to the northeast corner of the site in accordance with the following requirements:

- a. Relocate, provide space for, connect utilities (i.e., for telephone service, lighting, security cameras, and kiosks information signs), and construct the relocated transit center foundation, pad, and related infrastructure during the first phase of Mall expansion in accordance with DPWT Program of Requirements.
- b. 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.
- c. Construct required foundations for a large canopy structure covering passenger-waiting area.
- d. Provide transit information kiosks with display panels and the necessary electrical and cable conduit connections for future real-time transit information signs and variable message boards located at the Mall's customer service desk and 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.

- e. 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 where possible in a weather-protected locations.
  - f. Provide three taxicab stands in proximity to the transit center.
  - g. Provide and prepare a conceptual design for the same 300 commuter parking spaces for transit riders within close proximity to the transit center. Between 25 and 50 spaces may be located on the east side of the transit center within the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) I-270 West Spur right-of-way if permitted by SHA.
  - h. Enter into an access easement agreement with DPWT and WMATA to provide access for transit vehicles to and from the relocated transit center prior to release of any building permit for the proposed development.
8. Forest Conservation  
The proposed development shall comply with the conditions of the final forest conservation plan. The applicant shall satisfy all conditions prior to recording of plat(s) or Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) issuance of sediment and erosion control permits.
9. Stormwater Management  
The proposed development is subject to Stormwater Management Concept approval conditions dated June 1, 2004.
10. Development Program  
Applicant shall construct the proposed development in accordance with a Development Program. The Development Program shall be reviewed and approved by M-NCPPC staff prior to approval of signature set of site plan. The Development Program shall include a phasing schedule as follows:
- a. The proposed new or relocated sidewalks and bike paths along Democracy Boulevard, Westlake Drive, and Westlake Terrace shall be completed prior to occupancy of any new retail store in the first phase of the development.
  - b. Streets tree planting shall progress as the proposed sidewalks/bike path is completed, but no later than six months after completion of the sidewalk/bike path.
  - c. The proposed new transit center and associated park-and-ride spaces, as defined in Condition 7 above, shall be completed by the applicant and accepted by the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation prior to occupancy of any new retail store in the first phase of the development or removal of the existing on-site transit facility, whichever comes first.
  - d. Landscaping and pedestrian paths associated with each parking facility and building shall be completed as construction of each facility is completed.
  - e. Provide each phase of the development with required parking spaces.
  - f. Clearing and grading shall correspond to the construction phasing, to minimize soil erosion.
  - g. Phasing of dedications, stormwater management, sediment/erosion control, forestation, community paths, trip mitigation or other features.

11. Clearing and Grading

No clearing or grading prior to M-NCPPC approval of signature set of plans.

12. Signature Set

Prior to signature set approval of site and landscape/lighting plans the following revisions shall be included and/or information provided, subject to staff review and approval:

- a. Development program, inspection schedule, and Site Plan Opinion.
- b. Limits of disturbance.
- c. Methods and locations of tree protection.
- d. Note stating the M-NCPPC staff must inspect tree-save areas and protection devices prior to clearing and grading.
- e. Required handicapped, motorcycle and bicycle parking spaces.
- f. Additional benches or seating areas near the building entrances.
- g. Details of the proposed special paving.
- h. Changes to site and landscape plans in accordance with Conditions 2 through 6.

## SITE PLAN REVIEW ISSUES

### I. Transit Center

#### Existing Transit Facility

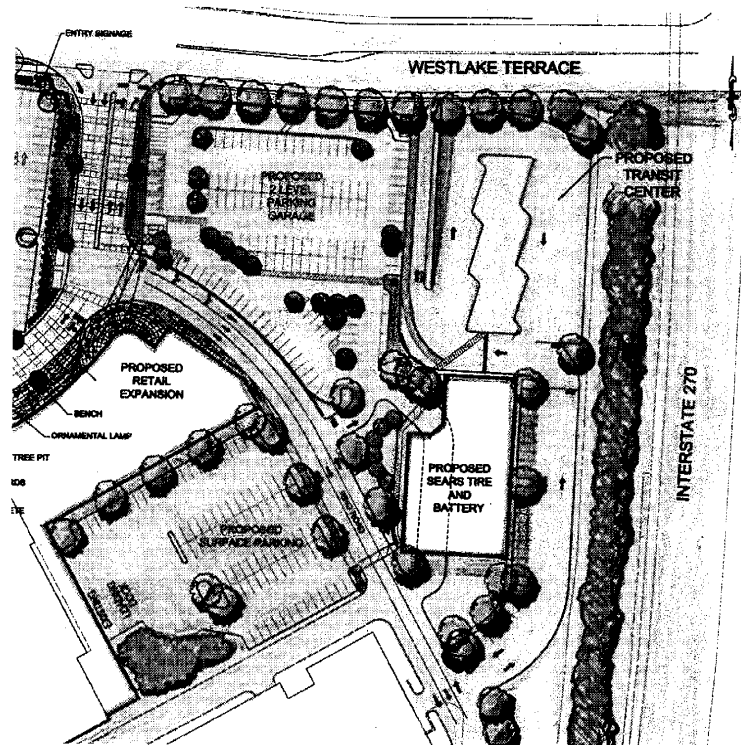
The Mall currently provides a transit facility, which is located near the western entrance drive off Westlake Terrace, with three bus bays and an adjacent commuter parking area for 250 spaces. The existing transit center is served by Metrobus routes J-1, J-2, J-3, & N-7 and Ride-On routes 6, 26, 38, 47, & 96. The transit center currently experiences the second highest ridership in the County for a non-Metro Station location, behind only Lake Forest Mall. Twenty-eight buses per hour during peak period currently enter and exit the station. The Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) estimates that by 2025, the number of buses will increase to thirty-eight buses with no rail connection and forty-three with a future rail connection.

#### Master Plan Recommendation

The 2002 Approved and Adopted Potomac Subregion Master Plan supported existing recommendations for the North Bethesda Transitway, which is proposed to connect Montgomery Mall via Rock Spring Park to the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metrorail station. The Subregion Master Plan specifically recommends a multi-modal transit center at the western terminus of the planned North Bethesda Transitway near Montgomery Mall.

#### Proposed Transit Center

The applicant has been working with DPWT staff to relocate the existing transit center to a new on-site location that will be able to accommodate future transit needs. The new transit center will be located in the northeast corner of the site. It will include six bus bays, two layover locations, a bus ramp up to Westlake Terrace for eastbound buses exiting the transit center, and a sidewalk along the bus ramp for pedestrian access. The applicant will provide the site for the center and construct the base infrastructure and platform of the bus station. In addition, required park-and-ride spaces will be provided in the adjacent parking facility. A canopy structure covering passenger-waiting area will be provided through a possible County CIP.



## II. Parking Waiver

Section E-3.7 of the Zoning Ordinance provides that 5.5 parking spaces for each 1,000 gross leasable square feet must be provided for a regional shopping center. The expanded mall will have 1,542,172 gross leasable square feet. Therefore, 8,482 parking spaces are required. The applicant requests a parking waiver to allow 4.5 spaces per 1,000 gross leasable square feet or 6,940 total spaces for the entire mall. The requested waiver represents a reduction of 1,542 parking spaces or 18 percent of the required number of spaces.

### Analysis

The requested waiver for a parking ratio of 4.5 spaces per 1,000 gross leasable square feet 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 percent occupancy and parking ratio 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 Mall/Source	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 be parked for a longer time period and spend more time shopping in these centers. These larger shopping centers have a wider availability of different types of retail activities compared with the limited number of stores in the typical neighbor shopping center.

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the requested parking waiver.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Site Vicinity

The subject property is located on the west side of I-270, between Democracy Boulevard and Westlake Terrace. It is bounded by Westlake Drive to the west and served by two freeway interchanges to the east. The property confronts multi-family housing in the R-20, R-30 and RH zones on the west side of Westlake Drive, and C-2 development on the north side of Westlake Terrace. Rock Spring Corporate Office Park is located across I-270 from the site to the east. Across Democracy Boulevard to the south are existing RT zoned townhouse communities. A small shopping center (Westlake Crossing) and a Texaco gas station are located between the Mall and Westlake Drive.





**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Site Description

The 57-acre site is currently developed with a 1,242-172 square-foot regional shopping center and associated parking. There are two vehicular access points on the Democracy Boulevard and Westlake Terrace frontages and three on Westlake Drive. A ring road links the entrance drives with all the parking facilities. A bus transit center is located in the northwestern portion of the site near the entrance drive off Westlake Terrace. There are no stream buffers, floodplains, or wetlands on the subject property. The subject property is entirely within the Cabin John Creek sub watershed (Use Class I) of the Middle Potomac watershed.



**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Proposal

The subject expansion plan for Westfield Shoppingtown Montgomery proposes to increase the total gross leasable area (GLA) of the existing Montgomery Mall from 1,242,172 square feet to approximately 1,537,000 square feet, an increase of approximately 295,000 square feet or 23.7 percent. The plan includes both the addition of new retail/entertaining spaces and renovation of existing retail space:

- Relocate the Hecht's Home store next to their main building.
- Remove the existing Sears Automotive store and build a new store near I-270.
- Create a new entertainment precinct, containing a new theater complex, relocated food court, restaurants and shops.
- Add new two-level "Hy-Style" retail component with the stores oriented towards the Westlake Terrace frontage.
- Remove existing three bus bays and build a new six-bus-bay transit center at the corner of I-270 and Westlake Terrace.
- Provide two new parking structures: a four-level garage located at the corner of Westlake Drive and Westlake Terrace and a two-level one at the corner of I-270 and Westlake Terrace (next to the new Transit Center location).
- Add a new retail store next to the new Westlake Drive parking garage.

