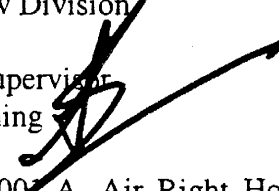


April 11, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Wynn Whitthans, Planner
Development Review Division

FROM: Shahriar Etemadi, Supervisor
Transportation Planning 

SUBJECT: Project Plan # 9-00001-A, Air Right Hotel Project, Bethesda Central Business District

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review of the subject application.

RECOMMENDATION

Transportation planning staff recommends the following conditions as part of APF test for transportation requirements related to Local Area Transportation Review (LATR).

1. Provide a 35-foot right-of-way from the center line of Waverly Street and subject the land immediately east of the dedicated right-of-way for a width of five feet to an easement for future dedication; provided however, that if the Sector Plan recommended right-of-way for Waverly Street is ever reduced to 70 feet or less, the easement for future dedication shall be extinguished.
2. Provide 40 feet from centerline, along the frontage of the property, for Montgomery Avenue right-of-way dedication.
3. Coordinate with Department of Public Works and Transportation to improve drainage problem at the southern terminus of Pearl Street.
4. Provide a minimum of 15 feet sidewalk along the frontage of the property on Waverly Street and Montgomery Avenue.

5. Provide a bicycle and pedestrian connection Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps and stairs between Pearl Street and the Capital Crescent Trail/Georgetown Branch Trail on the south side of the property.

Local Area Transportation Review

The proposed development is for a 216-room hotel on the site. A traffic statement was submitted to compare the traffic impact of previously approved development proposal and the current proposal. The site was approved for a 182 high-rise apartment complex at this location on January 4, 2001. At that time a traffic study was submitted and the impact of 182 high-rise apartments was evaluated and determined that all intersections were operating within the congestion standard of 1,800 Critical Lane Volume for Bethesda Central Business District.

The applicant submitted a traffic statement on December 4, 2004, to provide Transportation Planning staff with a comparison between the traffic that would have been generated and distributed by 182 high-rise apartments and the 216 room hotel that would replace about 8,044 square feet of existing retail use. The result of the study indicates that the total trips generated by the hotel will be less than what would have been under the previously approved plan. The following table shows the trip generation comparison for the two proposed developments.

USE	AM Peak			PM Peak		
	IN	OUT	TOTAL	IN	OUT	TOTAL
182 High-Rise Apartments	11	44	55	37	18	55
216 Room Hotel	29	19	48	26	22	48
80,044 square-foot Retail to be removed	(3)	(2)	(5)	(10)	(11)	(21)
Net reduction in trips	26	17	43	16	11	27

As shown in the table above, the proposed hotel will generate a total of 12 and 28 less trips during the weekday morning and evening peak hours respectively. In addition, most travelers staying in the hotel are expected to take advantage of the metro station that is only 600 feet away from the proposed site.

Staff also evaluated the directional distribution of traffic for the two different development proposals. Our evaluation indicates that the traffic pattern for a high rise apartment complex and a hotel should be the same because they both function as producers of trips during the morning peak hours, therefore the directional distribution of traffic must be the same. Based on the directional distribution of traffic, staff concluded the assignment of traffic to area intersections will also be the same and therefore, the traffic patterns are the same. These evaluations suggest that the proposed hotel will have less impact on the area transportation system than a 182 high-rise apartment building.

Based on the above stated facts, it is staff's conclusion that the proposed hotel development will pass the Local Area transportation Review test.

Road Classifications

Waverly Street is classified as a Business District Street with a recommended 80-foot right of way. This applicant is required to provide 35 feet of right-of-way from the Centerline of Waverly Street with additional five feet of easements for future dedication. Staff allowed a five-foot of required for right-of way to be placed in easements at this location for several reasons:

1. Waverley Street has a 90-degree angled curve in front of the property and therefore, the safe speed at this location could not be more than 15 miles per hour. The speed is one of the criteria for classification of a roadway and 15 miles per hour speed is well below a traffic speed allowed for a road, say an arterial that allows for more than 35 miles per hour speed.
2. All the street amenities such as wide sidewalks and tree panels required in front of the property for a safe, efficient, and desirable walking experience is provided within the dedicated right-of-way.
3. If the applicant were required to provide a full 40-foot right of way from the centerline, it would have negatively impacted the underground garage and the surrounding structures in order to meet the minimum requirements of building a hotel on this site.
4. There is no plan in the future to widen the road at this location.

Montgomery Avenue is classified as a Business District Street with a recommended 80-foot right-of-way. The applicant would provide half section of the required right-of-way, sidewalks, and other amenities.

Pearl Street is classified as a Business District with a recommended 85-foot right-of-way.

Wisconsin Avenue is classified as a Major Highway with recommended right-of-way varying from 104 feet to 120 feet through out the Central Business District (CBD) area.

Site Access, Circulation and Pedestrian Facilities

The access point to the site will remain at the existing location from Waverley Street where traffic from all directions could safely and easily access the garage under the hotel.

Waverley Street and Montgomery Avenue will be provided with adequate, and safe pedestrian walkways that are connected to a comprehensive network of pedestrian facilities throughout the CBD area. The Waverley street streetscape improvements proposed, as part of this project will eliminate the cantilevered portion of the existing building that provides for better pedestrian link. This improvement will open the sidewalk up to the sky and therefore, provides a more pleasant walking experience. It also provides for more visibility and safety at the garage entrance on Waverley Street.

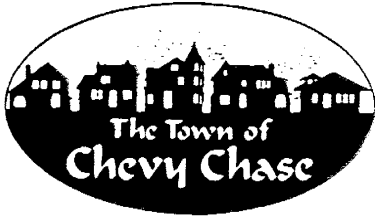


Applicant will provide a bicycle and pedestrian connection (ADA ramps and stairs) between Pearl Street and the Capital Crescent Trail/Georgetown Branch Trail on the south side of the property. This connection will improve access to the trail, as well as facilitating the access for students of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School who live in the neighborhoods to the south to use the trail for reaching their school.

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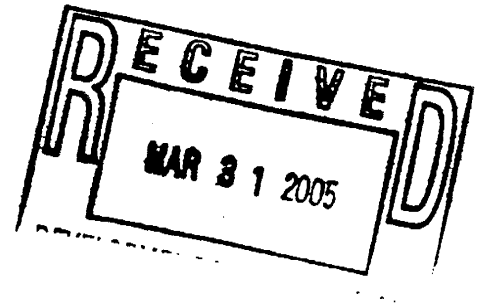
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Town Council
William H. Hudnut III. *Mayor*
Mier Wolf. *Vice Mayor*
Scott Orbach. *Secretary*
Robert Enelow. *Treasurer*
Linna M. Barnes. *Community Liaison*

Town Manager
Todd C. Hoffman



March 30, 2005

Wynn E. Witthans, Development Review Division
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Re: Hilton Hotel Project At The Air Rights Building in Bethesda

Dear Wynn:

We're pleased to inform you that the Town of Chevy Chase supports the Donohoe Company proposal to build a Hilton Hotel at the Air Rights Building site in Bethesda. The Town Council did not vote on this proposal but agreed unanimously at our March 9 council meeting to actively support county approval of this project. This excellent plan arrives after 5 years of planning for this site.

As you know, this plan entails the construction of a new hotel, which is certainly needed in Bethesda. The hotel design will well serve its customers, yet be of minimum impact on our neighborhood just behind the project. The project overlooks the Capital Crescent Trail and Elm Street Park as well as a number of residential properties in our town. That is why the Town Boundaries Committee, which I chair, met several times with the developer to provide input to make this project visually appealing to our residents who will live near it for years to come. Chris Bruch representing the Donohoe Company took us through several iterations of the plan until we agreed the developer had made great strides in accommodating the needs of residents whose properties are so close to this project. This is not the massive horizontal project extending over the Air Rights Building garage under consideration five years ago. This project is much less intrusive which we appreciate.

We are very enthusiastic about the developer agreeing to connect Pearl Street to the Capital Crescent Trail as part of this project. This has been a need for our hiker/bikers for years. The trail under the tunnel at Elm Street needs surface repair which the developer has also offered to make. Just south of the trail is Elm Street Park, which we love. It's a county park but the town helps maintain it including making sure trash is deposited in the good-looking new trashcans we provided. We highly praise you and Doug Powell for absolutely splendid work in reviewing park



improvements to which the developer has agreed. You opened our eyes to important possible park improvements the developer could undertake, yet you suggested nothing that won't maintain the character of the park or become prohibitive cost wise. Removing the deteriorating wood barriers in the sitting areas, redefining the park paths, grading the park where necessary and some of your other ideas will greatly improve the experience of park users comprised of noon hour Bethesda office workers and town residents on the weekend.

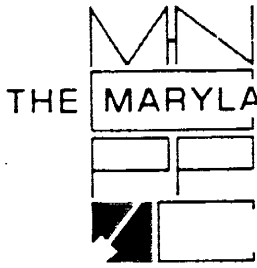
Development projects always have their compromise factor. For us we agree that the project should be allowed more height to make the hotel more economically viable according to the developer. The horse is out of the barn on Waverly Street. It appears to us that the hotel project will not violate the look of that street because it already has the Air Rights Building and the Residents Inn across the street at the same or greater height. If this project were proposed in the Woodmont Triangle around mostly low-rise buildings I don't think we would have supported the project exceeding the height requirements of the Bethesda Central District Master Plan. But to draw a line in the sand regarding height for the Air Rights Building site is a mistake. Frankly another development plan could legally be much more dense, horizontal and intrusive which we don't want for our town.

So we commend the Hilton Hotel Air Rights Building project to you and ask that after thorough consideration you approve it. It's a "win-win" project, which will benefit its users and neighbors and become another success story for downtown Bethesda.

Sincerely,

Mier Wolf
Vice Mayor

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THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MEMORANDUM

April 13, 2005

TO: Wynn Withans, Site Plan Review, Development Review Division
Michael Ma, Site Plan Supervisor, Development Review Division

FROM: Doug Powell, Plan Review Coordinator, Park Planning and Resource
Analysis Unit, Countywide Planning Division

SUBJECT: Air Rights Hotel Project, Project Plan #9-00001A

Park Planning and Resource Analysis staff requests the following **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL** for the above said project:

- Applicant to renovate the interior path network and sitting areas between Willow Lane and the Elm Street Promenade at Elm Street Urban Park, in accordance with the concept design by Parker Rodriguez, Inc. dated August 29, 2000 and attached hereto. Work to include 1) removal of the old paths and sitting areas, including the wooden post walls that surround the sitting areas, 2) re-grade (adding fill if necessary) the site as necessary to prevent water accumulation in the park, 3) install new paving along re-aligned trails and in sitting areas, and 4) install new benches, tables and chairs as determined by M-NCPPC staff to provide adequate seating and recreation in the park. The retaining wall that separates the Elm Street Promenade from the open space park area should be left in place except where necessary to connect the new paths to the promenade.
- Applicant to provide landscaping for the renovated park area to include 1) tree and shrub plantings around the new sitting areas, 2) re-seeding of the park area, and 3) additional trees and shrubs to compliment the trail and park improvements. Number of plantings, plant species and planting locations to be acceptable to M-NCPPC staff. Applicant to establish a tree preservation program acceptable to M-NCPPC staff to protect existing trees from damage during renovation.

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- Applicant to re-locate any existing lighting features and wiring in the park that is necessary to accommodate the renovations.
- Applicant to provide engineering and design plans acceptable to M-NCPPC staff for park site grading, construction of improvements, and necessary stormwater management. Improvements to be constructed to park standards and specifications.

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PARKER RODRIGUEZ, INC.
101 N. UNION STREET, SUITE 320, ALEXANDRIA VA 22314
PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

ELM STREET PARK
MASTER PLAN
ALT. I
August 29, 2000

