

September 11, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

FROM: Glenn Kreger, Chief, Area 2 ^{HK}
301-495-4653
Stephanie Dickel, Senior Planner Area 2 ^{SD}
301.495.4527

RE: Glenmont Metrocenter Preliminary Plan No. 120130080 (“Application”)

This supplemental memorandum addresses the compliance of this project with the applicable Sector Plan, which was addressed only briefly in my staff report dated August 30, 2013. The project is located within the Glenmont Center as identified by the 1997 *Glenmont Transit Impact Area and Vicinity Sector Plan*. The Planning Board made the finding in 2007 that the Development Plan for Local Map Amendment Nos. G-862 and G-863 was consistent with all of the general and specific recommendations stated in the 1997 Glenmont Sector Plan. The 1997 Sector Plan recommendations have not changed and the proposed project is substantially the same.

Glenmont Metrocenter- Sector Plan Analysis

General Recommendations

The project is located within the Glenmont Center, a district identified by the 1997 Sector Plan. “The Glenmont Center is intended to serve as a focal point for the community and promote a sense of place within the community. In addition to the new Metro station, the Center should include a mix of uses with particular emphasis on Transit Oriented Development. Gathering places and pedestrian friendly streets are also key elements of a viable Center.” (Page 14, Attachment A) The Sector Plan provides the following general objectives that are expected of development proposals in the area:

- *The proposed redevelopment will help to create a positive image for the Glenmont community, thereby contributing to a sense of community identity among those who live and work in Glenmont.*
- *The provision of an upgraded retail center will enable Glenmont residents to satisfy their day-to-day shopping needs locally without having to drive to more distant retail centers.*

- *An improved and enhanced shopping center will increase opportunities for community interaction and enhance community identity.*
- *More intense development around the transit station will help maximize the investment in transit facilities.*
- *The addition of new, high quality, middle and upper income housing will reduce housing turnover, replace aging housing stock, and minimize negative impacts on schools. Middle and higher income housing is under-represented in the area and should be encouraged. (page 22)*

The proposal represents the first significant private development since the adoption of the Plan over 15 years ago. It has the potential to be a catalyst project that boosts a positive image for the Glenmont community and attracts new, upgraded retail options to serve existing and future residents of Glenmont. The replacement of the 352 units known as Privacy World built in the 1960's with 1,550 dwelling units and 90,000 retail/commercial square footage fulfills the objectives of more intense development around the transit station and the addition of new, high quality housing. While the Preliminary Plan does not include the shopping center, the addition of 1,550 new dwelling units provides an important incentive to its redevelopment as well as customers for the existing and future retail in Glenmont.

Site Specific Recommendations

The Sector Plan also provided development guidelines that are intended to create a transit oriented Center in Glenmont. Although these development guidelines apply to all (re)developable areas, some site specific recommendations for the Subject Property were outlined.

Development Guidelines

1. *Provide for a compatible mix of uses within the new Transit Oriented Development (TOD).
The Transit Oriented Development should consist of a compatible mix of uses: housing and retail at Glenmont Metrocentre;*
2. *Provide diversity in housing types while maintaining compatibility and cohesion.
At the Glenmont Metrocentre site, building types should include low-, mid-, and high-rise buildings up to ten stories tall.*
3. *Provide an internal street pattern that promotes interconnectivity and minimizes walking distances.
A street (70-foot right-of-way – primary residential if a public street) should be provided within the Glenmont Metrocentre site to form a major axis. The new street should generally run parallel and north of Glenallan Avenue, should form an extension of Denley Road, and intersect with Layhill Road opposite the Winexburg Manor entrance. A determination of whether the street needs to be public will be made in the course of the development approval process.*
4. *Provide for a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment.
Buildings constructed as part of major redevelopment should be oriented to the streets where possible, thereby defining and bringing activity and interest to the sidewalk area. [...] Parking lots should be laid out in a system of streets and driveways to create direct pedestrian linkages with tree lined sidewalks and shade trees within the parking area. Tree lined sidewalks should be provided at all streets. Parallel parking should be provided to separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic.*

5. *New development in the Center should be compatible with the general character of the surrounding neighborhoods.*

Two high-rise buildings, with up to ten stories, may be located at the Glenmont Metrocentre site provided that they are at the rear of the site towards the railyards and do not shade existing housing. Lower buildings should be located along Glenallan Avenue and Layhill Road. (pages 36-38)

The proposal of 1,550 dwelling units and 90,000 retail/commercial square footage follows the sector plan's guidance of compatible mix. The Plan recommended a maximum of 51 units per acre with "retail uses and services for the convenience of the new residents would be appropriate in a mixed use development". (Page 30) The Development Plan stated Stage 1 would consist of up to 500 new dwelling units, the replacement of up to 275 existing dwelling units, and approximately 4,000 square feet of retail space. Stage 2 would consist of up to 698 new units, the replacement of up to 77 remaining older units and, and additional retail up to a total of 90,000 square feet (Council Resolution 16-424). The Preliminary Plan, consistent with the Development Plan, proposes 4,000 square feet of retail uses in Stage 1 and 86,000 square feet of retail uses in Stage 2, totaling 90,000 square feet of retail that will not only provide "retail uses and services for the convenience of the new residents", but for residents in the Glenmont area. In addition, the Sector Plan recognized that "most of the total potential development at the Glenmont Metrocentre property will not occur until the second stage of development is allowed to proceed" (Page 30), as discussed in the Staging section below.

The Sector Plan further states "The Glenmont Metrocentre is recommended for TS-R zoning to accommodate a variety of residential uses and housing types, possibly one or two buildings up to 10 stories in height and some convenience retail"(Page 30). The proposal includes a variety of housing types to include 1,325 multi-family units in buildings of four to six stories, and 225 townhouse units of various sizes. The range of proposed building heights is 35'-85'. The zoning approval (binding element #5) capped the maximum height at 85 feet. The Sector Plan recommended in guidelines #1 and #5 that the project include high-rise buildings up to ten stories; this does not mean that the proposed multi-family elevator buildings must be ten stories. Guideline 5 also says that up to two ten-story high-rises may (not must) be located at this site. The development proposes four multifamily residential buildings on this site (three of the four buildings are mixed-use with a retail component proposed) that are up to seven stories tall. Following the sector plan development concept (Page 31, Figure 14), the low-rise townhouses are proposed along Layhill Road and part of Glenallan Avenue. In addition, the Development Block Analysis, which is binding, states the maximum height along most of the Layhill Road frontage is 50 feet, 65 feet at the corner of Layhill Road and Glenallen Avenue.

The proposal provides interconnected streets with short blocks to emphasize pedestrian use and street character. Building setbacks have been kept to a minimum and arranged to activate the street and allow for pedestrian open spaces. The private streets have been developed with on-street parking, street trees, and a sidewalk system that provide connectivity to the adjacent Metro Station and points beyond. Additional design elements such as the rear-loaded garages, the use of minimum curb radii and the use of structured parking facilities will contribute to a pedestrian friendly environment.

The proposal provides a private street parallel to and north of Glenallan Avenue as called for in the sector plan. However, this street does not form an extension of Denley Road west of Georgia Avenue as recommended. The Applicant cites that the road extension was rejected at the time of zoning approval due to negative environmental impacts within the forest conservation area which is preserved in the

current proposal. Furthermore, SHA did not support the extension of Denley Road. The proposed private ring road will therefore be right-in, right-out at both Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road.

Community Facilities

1. *Provide open spaces (for each neighborhood) that are centrally located, offer gathering opportunities, and designed to form a public focus.*
Any redevelopment of the Glenmont Metrocentre apartments [...] should include a significant community open space, appropriately sized and designed to serve the development's need. Commercial redevelopment should include an open space that is activated by surrounding retail uses. [...] The open spaces in these developments should be centrally located and easily accessible on foot.
2. *Provide community facilities in highly accessible and visible locations.*
The Glenmont Metrocentre Apartments could be an appropriate location for a child care facility close to Metro.
3. *Determine potential sites for the new elevated storage tank.* (pages 38-44)

A stream fragment runs through the northern corner of the site; the Applicant proposes to reclaim and preserve the stream and surrounding area as an environmental buffer. The buffer would connect to a useable open space with frontage on Glenallan Avenue. With the potential to be activated by adjacent retail frontage, this large open space will serve as the community gathering space. Together, the environmental buffer and the large open space will be a visual focal point for people entering the site. A variety of smaller open spaces are proposed throughout the remaining site, including a designated play area.

Open Space:

- The open space provided in the approved Development Plan is as follows:
4.60 acres (16.7%) public use space
8.16 acres (29.6%) active/passive recreational space including:
 4.65 acres (16.9%) active/passive space
 3.33 acres (12.1 %) preservation area
 0.18 acres (0.7%) indoor amenity areas
Totaled up to 12.76 acres (46.3%) of open space shown.
- The Preliminary Plan shows:
4.60 acres (16.7%) public use space
8.16 acres (29.6%) active/passive recreational space including:
 4.65 acres (16.9%) active/passive space
 3.33 acres (12.1 %) preservation area
 0.18 acres (0.7%) indoor amenity areas
Totals up to 12.76 acres (46.3%) of open space shown.

The Applicant considers a child care facility a viable option and will address a potential, specific location at the time of Site Plan.

Since the adoption and approval of the 1997 Sector Plan, WSSC has rescinded their need for additional storage tanks in the Glenmont area.

Streets and Circulation

1. *Establish a hierarchy of streets that provides for the overall transportation needs.*
2. *Provide an interconnected street system which accommodates regional traffic while minimizing the impacts on the community and provides for local circulation and community integration.*
 - *Add an additional right-turn lane from westbound Glenallan Avenue to northbound Georgia Avenue.*
 - *Extend Denley Road east of Georgia Avenue, parallel to and north of Glenallan Avenue, when Glenmont Metrocentre redevelops. (This may be a private roadway.)*
3. *Discourage the use of local roads for through traffic during peak hours of travel while providing for local and regional traffic.*
4. *Improve safety along major roadways.*
5. *Improve access to the major activity centers in Glenmont by planning and constructing a street network with design features that create a visually attractive, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment.*
 - *[Glenallan Avenue] At the section between Layhill Road and Georgia Avenue, redevelopment of the Glenmont Metrocentre site should provide for the following within the street right-of-way along the north side: a 6-foot sidewalk, a Class I bikeway(8 feet minimum), a tree panel along the curb with pedestrian lighting.*

The Applicant will provide a 10-foot wide shared use asphalt path on the north side of Glenallan Avenue along their frontage with a five-foot wide green panel with pedestrian lighting. This sidewalk width is sufficient for pedestrians and cyclists to both travel safely along Glenallan Avenue between Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road.
6. *Promote the use of transit and discourage reliance on single occupancy vehicles (SOVs)*
 - *Easy and convenient access should be provided to the Metro station (and garage) for automobiles, buses, pedestrians, and bicyclists.*
7. *Expand the current bikeway network to connect with the regional trails and activity centers and to enhance its recreational uses.*
 - *Signage and pavement marking for bike trails should be improved, particularly [.....] the Class I trail along Glenallan Avenue between Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road.*

Signage and pavement marking for the Class I trail along Glenallan Avenue between Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road will be addressed at the applicable Site Plan phase.
8. *Establish Georgia Avenue as a pedestrian-friendly green boulevard.*
 - *On the east side of Georgia Avenue, a second row of trees would be desirable with redevelopment of the Glenmont Shopping Center and/or Glenmont Metrocentre sites. (pages 45-60)*

The Applicant is proposing a second row of trees on the east side of Georgia Avenue.

The proposal introduces a street network designed to serve the needs of residents using Metro and those using automobiles. The Applicant proposes a slightly different alignment from the Denley Road extension as explained above. The alternative alignment allows the road to meander through the site to encourage lower driving speeds, provide greater pedestrian and bike safety and create a distinctive neighborhood identity and streetscape. By providing a system of interconnected sidewalks leading to Metro and the surrounding public sidewalks, the project allows residents to reduce dependency on the automobile.

The Preliminary Plan does not illustrate in detail all proposed improvements to pedestrian and bike facilities. However, the Applicant has agreed to the streetscape guidelines described in the Sector Plan

and will detail them as part of the site plan application. The Binding Design Principles of the zoning approval demonstrates the Applicant's commitment to provide a high quality pedestrian and bike network system.

Noise

1. *Avoid exposure of new residential development to outdoor noise levels higher than 65 dBA Ldn.*
2. *Reduce excessive noise levels affecting existing residential units.*
3. *Minimize human exposure to noise associated with Glenmont Metro storage yard. (pages 78-79)*

Townhouses proposed on Blocks E, F, and G are in close proximity to the Metro storage yard. There is an existing forest stand that buffers majority of the proposed townhouses from the storage yard. There is also a significant grade change between the Subject Property and rail yard. The proposed development is approximately 30 feet higher in elevation above the storage yard. Lastly, trains entering the yard are traveling at slow speeds therefore not producing the amount of noise commonly associated with Metro operations. Given these factors combined, the potential for new residents to be exposed to harmful noise is minimal. Nevertheless, the Applicant has agreed to conduct a noise analysis at time of site plan review.

Staging

Stage One will allow up to 500 new units and 200 new jobs to proceed immediately to begin the process of redevelopment and revitalization of commercial and residential properties. Stage Two will delay all other new development until either a grade separated interchange or other transit or transportation improvement is provided that makes the intersection of Randolph Road and Georgia Avenue function at an acceptable level. (page 82)

Construction of the interchange will satisfy the Sector Plan staging requirement for Stage 2, allowing all of the proposed 1,550 units and 90,000 square feet to be built. Furthermore, binding element #4 approved at the rezoning stipulates that no building permit applications for Stage 2 of the development will be applied for until either a grade separated interchange is fully funded for construction or other transit or transportation improvements are under construction that would make the intersection of Randolph Road and Georgia Avenue function at an acceptable level as determined by the Montgomery County Planning Board or the Applicant has committed to the use of the Alternative Review Procedure for Metro Station Policy Areas. The intersection of Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road is funded in the current six-year State Consolidated Transportation Program (FY 2013-2018) for reconstruction as a grade-separated interchange with utility relocation work underway.

The Development Plan broke down the residential units and retail square footage per stage as follows:

Stage 1: Stage 1 would consist of up to 500 new dwelling units (the maximum recommended for Stage 1 in the Sector Plan), the replacement of up to 275 existing dwelling units, and approximately 4,000 square feet of retail space. The 77 existing units in the Stage 2 portion of the site would remain in place through Stage 1.

Stage 2: Stage 2 would consist of replacing the 77 remaining older units and constructing up to 698 new units, for a total of up to 775 units in Stage 2, and up to 1,550 dwelling units in the new community as a whole. Stage 2 would also add retail (and possibly commercial) space up to 90,000 square feet.

The type and extent of the retail proposed at Glenmont Metrocenter maybe also be contingent upon the outcome of the Aspen Hill Minor Master Plan Amendment.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis above and conditions of this report, Staff finds the proposed Preliminary Plan is in substantial conformance with both the 1997 and pending Glenmont Sector Plans.

GLENMONT METROCENTRE—TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

FIGURE 14

