



Sketch Plan No. 320140020, AVA Wheaton

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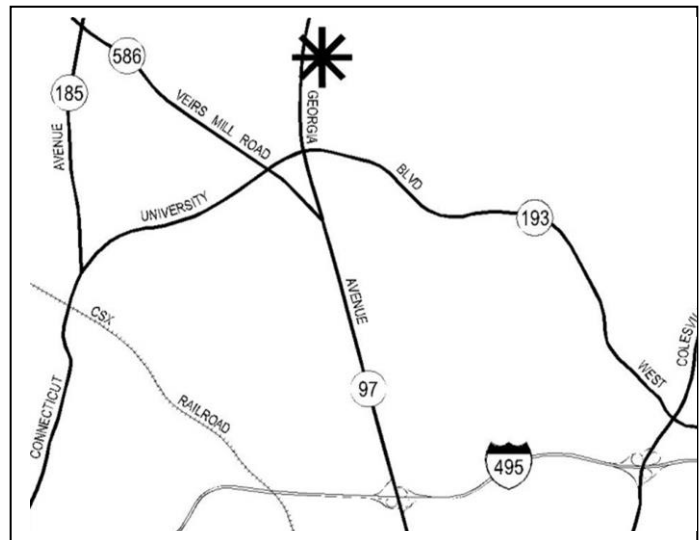
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Completed: 04/11/2014

Description

Revised: 04/24/2014

- Construction of 322 residential units and a parking garage;
- Current uses: vacant office buildings and surface parking;
- Located in the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Georgia and Blueridge Avenues;
- 3.7-acre site zoned CR-4.0: C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100 in the *Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan* area;
- Applicant: Avalon Bay Communities filed on December 18, 2013.



Summary

- Staff recommends approval of the AVA Wheaton Sketch Plan with conditions and the adoption of the Resolution.
- The proposed development will transform existing vacant office buildings and an associated surface parking lot into a multifamily residential building with structured parking.

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SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

Staff recommends approval of AVA Wheaton Sketch Plan No. 320140020 for a maximum of 460,500 square feet of development on 3.68 gross acres of land zoned CR-4: C 3.5 R 3.5 H 100. The following site development elements shown on the sketch plan stamped "Received" by the M-NCPPC on March 7, 2014 and March 19, 2014 are binding under Section 59-C-15.43(d); all other elements are illustrative:

1. Maximum density and height;
2. Approximate location of lot(s) and public dedications;
3. General location and extent of public use space;
4. General location of vehicular access points; and
5. Public benefit schedule.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Density
The development is limited to a maximum total of 460,500 square feet of residential development. The number of dwelling units will be determined at site plan.
2. Height
The development is limited to a maximum height of 50 feet.
3. Incentive Density
The development must be constructed with the public benefits listed below, unless modifications are made under Section 59-C-15.43(d). Total points must be at least 100 and be chosen from at least four categories as required by Section 59-C-15.82(a). The requirements of Division 59-C-15 and the Implementation Guidelines must be fulfilled for each public benefit provided.
 - a. Transit proximity;
 - b. Connectivity and Mobility achieved with through-block connection and wayfinding;
 - c. Diversity of Uses and Activities achieved through dwelling unit mix and enhanced accessibility for the disabled;
 - d. Quality Building and Site Design achieved through structured parking, public open space, exceptional design and architectural elevations.
 - e. Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment achieved through the purchase of Building Lot Terminations (BLTs), tree canopy, vegetated area, and cool roof.

4. Building Lot Terminations (BLTs)

Prior to issuance of a building permit, the Applicant must provide proof of purchase and/or payment for the required 0.906 BLTs to the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).

5. Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs)

The development must provide MPDUs in accordance with Chapter 25A.

SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

Site Vicinity

The subject site (Site) comprises one parcel and three lots located north of Blueridge Avenue and between Georgia Avenue and Elkin Street. It lies within the Blueridge District as identified in the 2012 *Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan* (Sector Plan). The Site is within walking distance of the Core, Wheaton Regional Park, and nearby residential neighborhoods. The entire Site falls within the ½-mile radius from the Wheaton Metro Station entrance. The existing 4-story commercial building at the corner of Blueridge Avenue and Elkin Street is not included in this application. Parking for this building will continue to be provided by the confronting public parking lot.

To the west, across Georgia Avenue is a 3-story office building and an auto service shop. To the south across Blueridge Avenue is a retail shopping strip with frontage along Georgia Avenue, a 3-story commercial building, and County-owned, Parking Lot 14. The majority of the northern property line abuts a vacant parcel owned by WMATA. A small portion of the northern property line abuts a garden apartment complex along Elkin Street. To the east, across Elkin Street are more garden apartment buildings owned by Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP).



Vicinity Map

Site Analysis

The Site is approximately 3.7 acres and zoned CR4.0: C3.5, R3.5, H100. It consists of Parcel C and Lots 5, 6, and 7 of the Villa Verde subdivision, all of which are owned by Avalon Bay Communities. The Site is currently improved with four office buildings and surface parking. The main office building onsite, 11501 Georgia Avenue, varies in height from a 3-story building on Georgia Avenue to a 7-story building along Blueridge Avenue. 2413 Blueridge Avenue is a one-

story building on Lot 5. 2411 Blueridge Avenue is a two-story building on Lot 6. 2409 Blueridge Avenue is a two-story building with basement on Lot 7.

The Site is located in the Wheaton Urban District, which is a special taxing district that enables the County to provide services including security, streetscape maintenance, tree maintenance, sidewalk repairs, marketing, and event programming. It is in State-designated Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District, which provides property tax credits for buildings built or renovated for a qualifying residency artist, or for an arts and entertainment business including live-work space for artists. It is also in an Enterprise Zone, which is a State economic development program that provides tax incentives to eligible businesses. The southern portion of the Site fronting Blueridge Avenue is within the Wheaton Parking Lot District, which facilitates reduced parking requirements and shared parking strategies.



Site Aerial (left) Blueridge District Proposed Zoning- 2012 Wheaton Sector Plan (right)

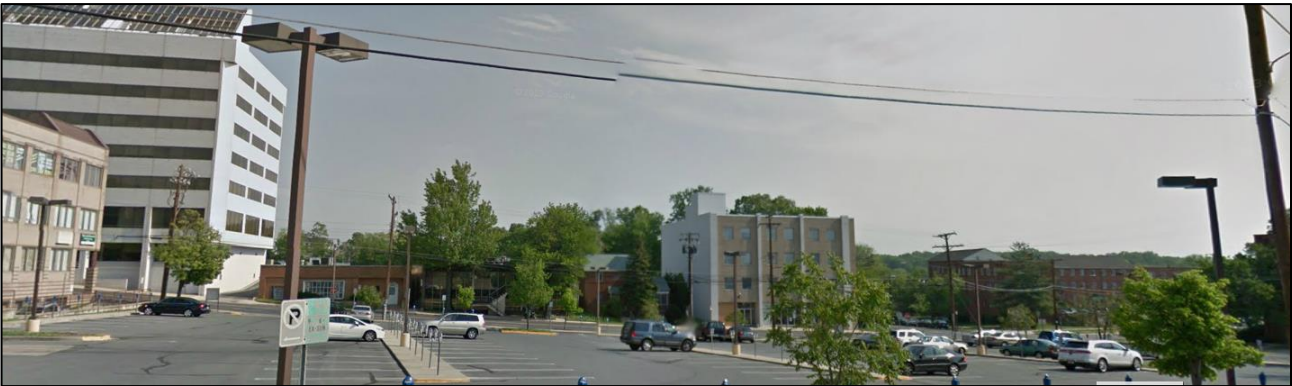
Staff approved Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation plan (NRI/FSD #420131840) on June 27, 2013. There are no known rare, threatened, or endangered species on site; there are no forests, 100-year floodplains, stream buffers, wetlands, or other environmentally sensitive features on site. The Site has 5 trees (between 24" and 30" DBH) and 3 trees (≥ 30 " DBH). There is a stormwater management pond on site at the east side of the existing parking lot. There are no known historic properties or features on site. The Site topography slopes from Georgia Avenue to Elkin Street with approximately 40 feet of grade change.



Street level view from the intersection of Georgia and Blueridge Avenues



Street level view from the intersection of Blueridge Avenue and Elkin Street. Building in the foreground is not part of this application



Street level view of frontage along Blueridge Avenue across Parking Lot 14

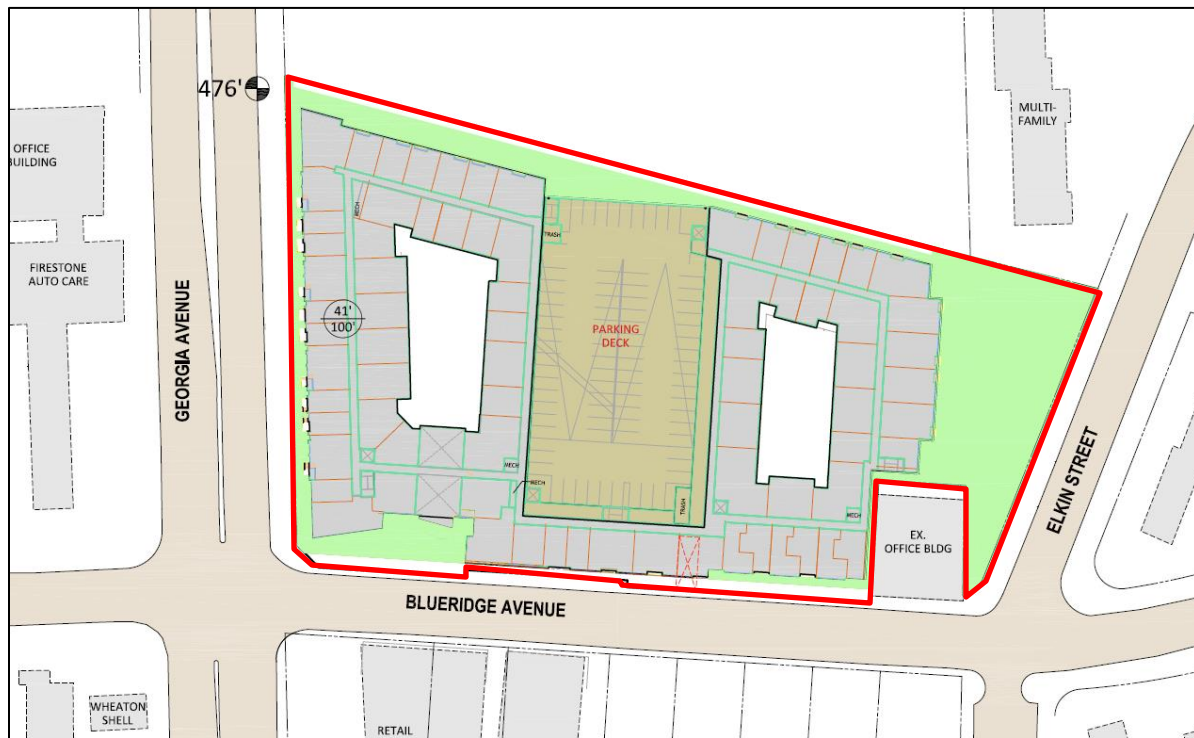
SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposal

The proposed sketch plan application (Project) is for construction of a multifamily, mid-rise residential complex comprising 322 apartment units, including 12.5% MPDUs. The residential building wraps an above-grade parking garage located in the center of the site.

Uses and Density

The Project proposes to develop up to approximately 460,492 square feet of residential development, approximately 2.34 FAR. Amenities to support the residential community include a fitness center, lounge, bike spa, two courtyards with fire pits, a swimming pool, outdoor grilling stations and outdoor lounges.



Site plan

Building

The proposed building varies in height between four and five stories as the building steps down from west to east along Blueridge Avenue. Along Georgia Avenue, the building reaches a maximum height of 41' 6". The proposed parking garage will be only visible from the north as the residential building wraps around it along Georgia Avenue, Blueridge Avenue and Elkin Street. The façade design of the garage screens the parking areas and mirrors the façades of the residential units along the north elevation. The parking structure is 4-55.5 floors high accommodating approximately 410 parking spaces.



Illustrative perspective from the intersection of Georgia and Blueridge Avenues



Blueridge Avenue Elevation including the existing office building not part of this application



North Elevation including the structured parking garage in the center

Open Space and Environment

The proposed open space concept features both public and private spaces. The key public spaces are at the main entrance to the lobby and along Elkin Street. The entry plaza near the intersection of Georgia and Blueridge Avenues will feature ornamental grasses, specimen trees, pavers and monumental stairs all designed and organized to accentuate the lobby area. The open space along Elkin Avenue is the largest open space dedicated to public use. It includes features such as picnic tables, chess tables, butterfly garden and a dog waste station.

Private open spaces include two courtyards at approximately 5,000 square feet each. They will have amenities such as seating areas, a swimming pool, grilling stations, fire pits and outdoor lounges.

The Project features a sustainable design strategy that includes bioretention areas, areas for vegetated plantings, and cool roof.



Open Space Concept



Elkin Street Elevation, including the existing office, with a portion of the proposed open space



Public Use and Public Open Space

Transportation

The Project is served by Georgia Avenue (MD 97), Blueridge Avenue and Elkin Street. Pedestrian and bicycle movements will mostly continue as they exist today on sidewalks at the periphery. Access to the main lobby entrance is provided directly from the sidewalks near the intersection of Georgia and Blueridge Avenues. A mid-block connection along the northern property line will provide a pedestrian connection parallel to Blueridge Avenue between Georgia Avenue and Elkin Street. Vehicular access to/from the parking garage is proposed along Blueridge Avenue. All required parking for residents and visitors will be provided within the parking garage.

Phasing

The proposed development will be built in one phase.



Vehicular Circulation



Pedestrian Circulation



Section details of the proposed east-west pedestrian connection along the northern property line

Community Outreach

The Applicant has met all proper signage, noticing, and submission meeting requirements. The Applicant also held the required pre-submission community meeting at the Wheaton Library on October 29, 2013. Staff has not received any written correspondence on this application.

Coordination for Future Regulatory Reviews

In addition to other requirements of Chapter 50, Subdivision Regulations, and Chapter 59, Zoning Ordinance, at the time of Preliminary Plan and/or Site Plan review, the Applicant must address the following:

- a. Update the submitted traffic counts in the submitted traffic study to satisfy the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) test, if the traffic counts are over a year old at Preliminary Plan filing.
- b. Dedicate additional 4.5 feet of right-of way for a total of 64.5 feet from the centerline of Georgia Avenue (MD 97).
- c. Issues detailed in the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) letter dated March 21, 2014.

- d. Enter into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the Planning Board when a Wheaton Traffic Mitigation Organization is established. In the interim, the applicant should work to encourage the project's residents to use transit through MCDOT promotional programs and/or other means.
- e. Obtain a waiver from the standard right-of-way truncation at the corner of Blueridge Avenue and Elkin Street.
- f. Provide the Sector-Planned, LB-4, on-street/signed shared bikeway along the north side of the Blueridge Avenue frontage by removing the existing on-street parking, as approved by MCDOT.
- g. Provide sidewalk and streetscaping along Georgia and Blueridge Avenues in accordance with the *Wheaton Central Business District Road Code Design Standards* and the County's Context Sensitive Road Design Standards, which must comply with the American with Disabilities Act.
- h. Widen the existing 4-foot wide sidewalks along the Elkin Street frontage to five feet in accordance with the County's Context Sensitive Road Design Standards.
- i. Provide and show on the plans handicapped ramps and crosswalks at the Blueridge Avenue intersections at Georgia Avenue and Elkin Street.
- j. Provide and show on the plans a flush sidewalk across the garage entrance and loading area.
- k. Provide bike parking spaces as required in the CR zone including a minimum of:
 - i. Ten public bike racks (inverted-U or equivalent approved by Staff that conforms to American Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals Guidelines) located near main building entrance.
 - ii. One hundred private bike lockers or a secured bike room in a well-lit area located in the parking garage near an elevator or parking garage's access point.
- l. Demonstration of how each public benefit satisfies the Zoning Ordinance and Incentive Density Implementation Guideline requirements.
- m. Compliance with the Planning Board's Recreation Guidelines.
- n. Baseline noise analysis submitted at time of Preliminary Plan with final plan with treatments at time of Site Plan.

~~#~~0. Final design of the east-west pedestrian connection should consider CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles to create a safe walking path

SECTION 4: PROJECT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Section 59-C-15.43(c) of the Zoning Ordinance states: “In approving a sketch plan, the Planning Board must find that the following elements are appropriate in concept and appropriate for further detailed review at site plan. The sketch plan must:”

1. *meet the objectives, general requirements, and standards of this Division [59-C-15];*

I. The Sketch Plan meets the objectives of Section 59-C-15.2 quoted below; specifically, the proposed development will:

a) *Implement the policy recommendations of applicable master and sector plans.*

The Project will transform an auto-oriented, vacant office building with surface parking into an urban residential development with diversity of units and improvements to the public realm;

b) *Target opportunities for redevelopment of single-use areas and surface parking lots with a mix of uses.*

The Project will replace a vacant office building, its associated surface parking lot and a few other small buildings with a predominately four-story residential building with structured parking. Adding residential uses at this Site will provide a mix of uses among the existing commercial uses along Georgia Avenue;

c) *Reduce dependence on the automobile by encouraging development that integrates a combination of housing types, mobility options, commercial services, and public facilities and amenities.*

The Project will provide a range of residential unit types with public facilities and amenities, and encourage alternate modes of travel, all within ½ mile of the Wheaton Metro Station. The viability of retail commercial services at this Site is doubtful due to little prospects for the necessary customer volume outside the existing retail core;

d) *Allow a mix of uses, densities, and building heights appropriate to various contexts to ensure compatible relationships with adjoining neighbors.*

The density and height of the residential Project are compatible with the adjoining neighborhood of low-rise office and commercial buildings and garden apartments;

e) *Allow an appropriate balance of employment and housing opportunities.*

The Project will offer a variety of housing options including market-rate units, and MPDUs; and

f) *Standardize optional method development by establishing minimum requirements for the provision of public benefits that will support and accommodate density above the standard method limit.*

The Project will provide the required public benefits from a minimum of four categories to achieve the desired incentive density above the standard method limit.

II. The Sketch Plan meets the requirements of Section 59-C-15.6, General Requirements, as follows:

Section 15-C-15.61 - Master Plan and Design Guidelines Conformance

The Project conforms to the Sector Plan and Design Guidelines as outlined in Finding #2 below.

Section 59-C-15.62 - Bicycle Parking Spaces and Commuter Shower/Change Facility

The Project provides accommodation for the minimum required number of bicycle parking spaces for residents and visitors and commuter shower/change facilities. Details will be provided at the time of Site Plan.

Section 59-C-15.63 - Parking

The proposed number of parking spaces satisfies the minimum and maximum as outlined in the Zoning Ordinance. The Project proposes all parking in a structured facility. The final number of parking spaces will be determined at Site Plan based on the final number of residential units.

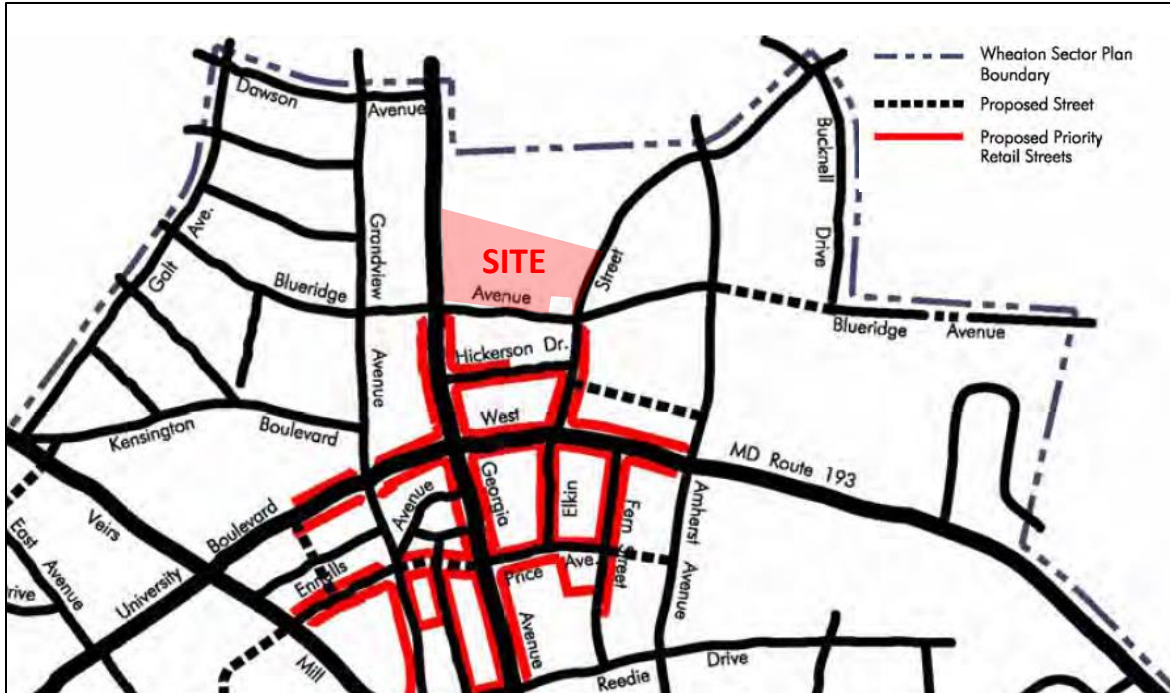
Section 59-C-15.7 - *Development Standards*

The Sketch Plan meets the development standards of Section 59-C-15.7, as shown in the Data Table below:

Project Data Table			
Section 59 - C	Development Standard	Permitted/ Required	Approved/Proposed
	Gross Tract Area (sf)	n/a	196,518
15.71	Density (sf)		
	<i>Non-residential (C)</i>	687,813	0
	<i>Residential (R)</i>	687,813	460,492
	TOTAL Maximum FAR	786,072 (4.0 FAR)	460,492 (2.34 FAR)
15.71	Building Height (feet)	100	(up to) 50
15.72	Minimum Setback	n/a	n/a
15.73	Minimum Public Use Space (%)	10	10
15.74	Residential Amenity Space (sf)		
	<i>Indoor</i>	5,000	5,000
	<i>Outdoor</i>	5,000	10,000
	TOTAL	10,000	15,000
15.631	Parking (spaces)		436 410
	<i>Maximum</i>	436	
	<i>Minimum</i>	225	

2. *further the recommendations and objectives of the applicable master or sector plan;*

The Project is consistent with, and furthers the recommendations of the 2012 *Wheaton Sector Plan*. The Site is located in the Blueridge District. The Sector Plan states that the “Blueridge District is the northern gateway to downtown Wheaton and is within walking distance of the Core, Wheaton Regional Park, and nearby neighborhoods. It is evolving into a residential neighborhood with small, neighborhood-serving retail on the ground floor and some office uses. Future development should include street-oriented businesses along Georgia Avenue and University Boulevard West, along with housing, professional offices, and neighborhood retail centered on a public space in the vicinity of Parking Lot 14” (p.49). For the Site, the Plan recommends to “Rezone Parcel C, 5, 6, and 7 from CBD-1 to CR 4.0, C 3.5, R 3.5, H 100” (p.50).



Portion of Map 6: Proposed Priority Retail Streets from the Wheaton Sector Plan with the Site highlighted

The Sector Plan highlights the Priority Retail Streets within the Blueridge District on page 22. The Project’s frontage along Georgia Avenue, Blueridge Avenue and Elkin Street are not designated Priority Retail Streets. Although the Project does not include any retail uses, it provides some activation along Georgia Avenue and Blueridge Avenue with individual residential entrances, and by locating the lobby, fitness center and bike spa at the sidewalk level, along Blueridge Avenue to provide visible activation.

Density and Building Height

The proposed density and height are within the envelope established by the Sector Plan.

Master-Planned Streets

The streets are consistent with Sector Plan recommendations and Wheaton Design Guidelines for streets.

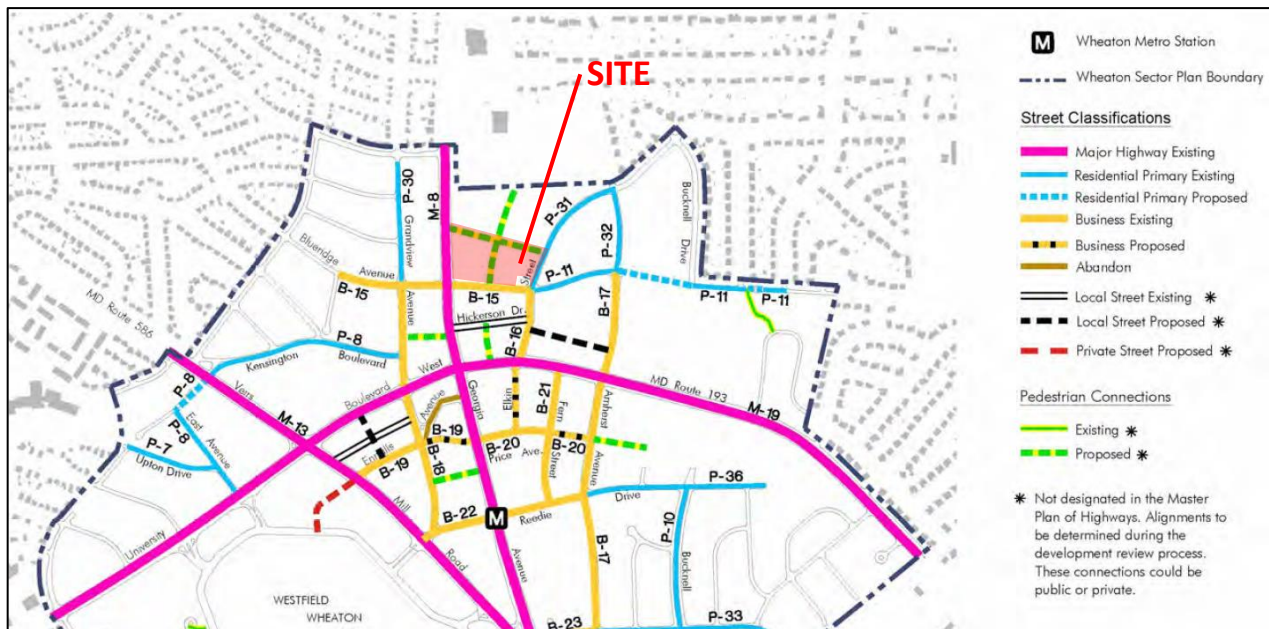
1. Georgia Avenue (MD 97) is designated as a six-lane divided major highway, M-8, with a recommended minimum 120-foot wide right-of-way and no bikeway. However, the *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) recommends a wider, 129-foot right-of-way between 400 feet north of Blueridge Avenue and Reedie Drive, to the south (p. 33). It states that this 129-foot width “may not include land needed for spot improvements such as turn lanes and stations.” The Project provides a total of 64.5 feet dedication from the centerline of Georgia Avenue.

2. Blueridge Avenue is designated as a two-lane business street, B-15, with the recommended 70-foot wide right-of-way and an on-street bike lane/signed shared roadway, LB-4. The existing right-of-way dedication is 35 feet from the centerline.
3. Elkin Street is designated as a two-lane residential primary street, P-31, with a 70-foot wide right-of-way and no bikeway. The existing right-of-way dedication is 35 feet from the centerline.

Pedestrian and Bikeway Network

The Sector Plan recommended two pedestrian connections for this Site: an east-west connection along the Site’s northern property line between Georgia Avenue and Elkin Street; and a north-south connection between the Site’s northern property line and Blueridge Avenue. The Sector Plan states, “The north-south pedestrian connection shown on this block ... should be designed as a safe and pleasant, direct passage, open to the public, with ample width, height and adequate lighting between Blueridge Avenue and future connection provided on the Leesborough development site to the north.

Pedestrians should be able to travel from Blueridge Avenue to points north, including any future development at the underdeveloped WMATA site, the Leesborough community, the Wheaton Library, and the Wheaton Recreational Center, without obstacles and in an inviting and safe manner. This connection may also be provided as a private street.” (p. 50)



Portion of Map 17: Existing and Proposed Street and Pedestrian Network from the Wheaton Sector Plan with the Site highlighted

The Project provides an east-west pedestrian path along the northern property line and a modified alignment of the north-south connection illustrated on page 61 of the Sector Plan. The proposed alignment is on the eastern edge of the project, between the east-west connection and Elkin Street, traversing the proposed open space along Elkin Street. The

modified alignment, in combination with the east-west connection, achieves the Sector Plan's intent to provide pedestrian access between Blueridge Avenue and points north without obstacles and in an inviting and safe manner.

A Signed Shared Roadway/On-Road bikeway is recommended for Blueridge Avenue (LB-4). The Project accommodates the implementation of the recommended bikeway.

Public Use

The proposed public use spaces are consistent with the Sector Plan recommendations. The Plan envisions a system of large and small, connected public use spaces, where people can gather, enjoy the outdoors, and conduct daily business (pg.29). The Project provides a collection of spaces around the development including a larger space designed with picnic tables, chess tables, butterfly garden and a dog waste station.

Environment

The Sector Plan envisions the area as growing "greener through redevelopment by creating a sustainable community that conserves energy and uses roofs and green spaces to filter stormwater and purify air" (p. 73). Minimization of carbon emissions; minimization and mitigation of impervious surface; and increasing tree canopy are some of the Plan's environmental goals. The Project features vegetated wall, cool roof, and vegetated planting areas throughout the development along with bio-filters and stormwater vaults. At Site Plan, the Applicant must demonstrate how the Plan's sustainability recommendations will be achieved.

Wheaton Design Guidelines

While the Design Guidelines do not provide specific recommendations for the Site, the Project furthers the goal of supporting an identifiable center (Guidelines p. 10) by enhancing Georgia Avenue as an urban boulevard around the Core through wider sidewalks. It also establishes the corner of Georgia and Blueridge Avenues with a distinctive design treatment that will mark it as the gateway.

The Project provides appropriate transitions (Guidelines p. 25) by stepping the building height down in relation to the topography and retaining the existing open space along Elkin Street. These two design elements minimize the impact on adjacent and confronting properties.

The Project improves the public realm (Guidelines p. 30) by enhancing pedestrian access along the street and by providing the east-west pedestrian connection through the site.

In concert with the Sector Plan, the Design Guidelines recommend pedestrian through-block connections to shorten walking distances, to create connections between open spaces, and to promote additional retail activity (p. 24). The Project provides an east-west connection along its northern property line and provides for a future connection to points north.

3. *achieve compatible internal and external relationships between existing and proposed nearby buildings, open space, and uses;*

The proposed building and open spaces are compatible with existing nearby buildings, open spaces and uses. This compatibility is achieved through:

- Building heights similar to those of office buildings and garden apartments adjacent or close to the Site;
- Emphasis on the public realm through a continuous street wall along Georgia and Blueridge Avenues;
- Articulated façade design that complements the adjacent building;
- The use of façade treatments and vegetated wall to mask the visible levels of the parking structure;
- Replacement of surface parking with structured parking creating a stronger relationship between buildings, sidewalks, and streets;
- Provision of units accessed directly from the sidewalks along Georgia and Blueridge Avenues; and
- Preservation of the open space along Elkin Street.

4. *provide satisfactory general vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist access, circulation, parking, and loading;*

The Project provides satisfactory circulation, parking, and loading for cars, trucks, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Specifically, this Sketch Plan provides:

- Expanded sidewalks and new pedestrian paths to facilitate safe, pedestrian movement throughout the Site;
- Off-street loading areas for the residential units, alleviating congestion on Georgia and Blueridge Avenues;
- Increased parking for bicycles and sufficient vehicular parking in a structured facility; and
- Vehicular turning movements into the proposed garage that aligns with those of the confronting public parking lot.

5. *propose an outline of public benefits that support the requested incentive density;*

The Application includes public benefits that address the general incentive and density considerations required by Section 59-C-15.83. The public benefits:

- a. Take into consideration “the recommendations, objectives, and priorities of the applicable master or sector plan” by providing the diversity of housing, general sustainability measures, and connectivity improvements;
- b. Meet “the CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines and any design guidelines adopted for the applicable master plan area” by providing the proper calculations and criteria for each public benefit and by proposing public open space, structured parking, and through-block connections as recommend in the Design Guidelines;

- c. Are appropriate for “the size and configuration of the tract” by providing all required parking spaces in structured facilities to create public open space within walking distance of Metro;
- d. Adequately address “the relationship of the site to adjacent properties” by designing the building at an appropriate scale for its context, retaining existing areas of open space and creating a façade design that complements the existing character of the area;
- e. Consider “the presence or lack of similar public benefits nearby” through the provision of environmental benefits, and pedestrian connections that are currently lacking in this area; and
- f. Provide “enhancements beyond the elements listed in the individual public benefit descriptions or criteria that increase public access to or enjoyment of the benefit,” which will be developed and assessed during Preliminary and Site Plan reviews.

Public Benefits Calculations			
Public Benefit	Incentive Density Points		
	Max Allowed	Requested	Approved/Recommended
59-C-15.852: Transit Proximity	50	30	30
59-C-15.853: Connectivity and Mobility Options			
Through Block Connection	20	10	7
Wayfinding Signage	10	5	5
59-C-15.854: Diversity of Uses and Activities			
Dwelling Unit Mix	10	5	5
Enhanced Accessibility	20	66.5	66.5
59-C-15.855: Quality of Building and Site Design			
Structured Parking	20	10	10
Public Open Space	20	2	2
Exceptional Design	10	5	2.5
Architectural Elevations	20	10	5
59-C-15.856: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment			
Building Lot Terminations	30	5	5
Vegetated Wall	10	5	5
Tree Canopy	15	7.5	7.5
Vegetated Area	15	5	5
Cool Roof	10	5	5
TOTAL	260	110.5 111	100 100.5

Transit Proximity

The property is within ½ mile of the Wheaton Metro Station, which allows the development to be eligible for Level 1 transit as defined in the Zoning Ordinance. Staff recommends the full 30 points as suggested in the 2012 *Commercial/Residential Zones Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines* (CR Guidelines).

Connectivity and Mobility Options

Through-Block Connection: The Applicant requests 10 points for providing a safe and attractive pedestrian connection between streets. Per the CR Guidelines, 10 points are appropriate for connections that are open-air, at least 15 feet wide, and open to the public at least between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. The width of the path is 5 feet wide and the connection ranges from over 24 feet to a minimum of 12.3 feet, which is less than the prescribed minimum width. Staff recommends 7 points. Final detailed plan of circulation and site layout will be approved at Site Plan.

Wayfinding Signage: The Applicant requests 5 points for the design and implementation of a wayfinding system orienting pedestrians and cyclists to major open spaces, cultural facilities, and transit opportunities in Wheaton. Per the CR Guidelines, an incentive density of up to 5 points is appropriate for installing wayfinding signage in proposed open spaces and other public spaces. The Applicant has provided a wayfinding plan to install signs with maps and information. Staff supports this request. Final design and layout will be approved by applicable agencies prior to permits.

Diversity of Uses and Activities

Dwelling Unit Mix: The Applicant requests 5 points. Per the CR Guidelines, 5 points are appropriate for providing the minimum residential mix with at least 7.5% efficiency units, 8% 1-bedroom units, 8% 2-bedroom units, and 5% 3 or more bedroom units. The Applicant's initial estimate of providing 15% efficiency units, 37% 1-bedroom units, 43% 2-bedroom units, and 5% 3-bedroom units meets the requirement. Final layout, design and location to be approved at Site Plan. Staff supports this request.

Enhanced Accessibility for the Disabled: The Applicant requests ~~6-6.5~~ points for constructing ~~8-7~~ dwelling units that satisfy American National Standards Institute A117.1 Residential Type A standards or an equivalent County standard. The CR Guidelines recommends each percent of units is worth 3 points. Final location and area of the units are to be approved at Site Plan. Staff supports this request.

Quality of Building and Site Design

Structured Parking: The Applicant requests 10 points for structured parking facilities. This incentive is granted on a sliding scale based on the percentage of spaces provided above and below ground. The initial estimate of ~~430-410~~ spaces in an above-grade facility yields a total of 10 points. Final parking counts to be determined at Site Plan. Staff supports this request.

Public Open Space: The Applicant requests 2 points for open space in addition to the minimum public use space required. Points for this incentive are granted on a sliding scale based on the percentage of the net lot area. The conceptual layout with 4,769 square feet of additional open space above the required public use space yields a total of 2 points. Staff supports this request. Final detailed plan and site layout will be approved at Site Plan.

Exceptional Design: The Applicant requests 5 points for building or site design that enhances the character of a setting. Per the CR Guidelines, incentive density of 5 points is appropriate for development that meets at least four of the guideline criteria. The Applicant asserts that the Project provides innovative solutions in response to the immediate context; enhances the public realm in a distinct and original manner; creates a sense of place and serves as a landmark; and introduces materials, forms, or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way.

Staff finds the Project only meets the latter two criteria and recommends 2.5 points. The articulation of the building corner at Georgia and Blueridge Avenues along with entry plaza will create a sense of place that would be easily identifiable by material and the angular façade. The façade treatment of the exposed parking garage on the north side would represent the application of a building technique that is unique to the other garages in the immediate vicinity. The use of mullions in the openings of the garage with color accent panels creates a façade that screens the parking areas and mirrors the façades of the residential units. Staff was unable to conclude that the Project provides innovative solutions in response to the immediate context or enhances the public realm in a distinct and original manner.

Architectural Elevation: The Applicant requests 10 points for providing elevations of architectural facades and agreeing to be bound by particular elements of design that affect the perception of mass or pedestrian comfort, or enhance neighborhood compatibility. The CR Guidelines finds 10 points appropriate for showing particular elements of the façade, including minimum amount of transparency on the first floor; minimal spacing between operable doors; and design priorities of the applicable master plan or implementing design guidelines. Staff recommends 5 points for this benefit.

Minimum Amount of Transparency

The Applicant has agreed to be bound to the provision of 35% transparency of the ground floor of the Georgia Avenue building façade and a minimum of 40% transparency for the ground floor of the Blueridge Avenue façade. Ground-floor transparency enhances pedestrian comfort by providing a sense of safety and security and adds visual interest. While the Applicant has worked with Staff to increase ground-floor transparency along Blueridge, the Project does not accomplish ground-floor transparency on the Elkin Street façade abutting the open space. Therefore, Staff recommends partial credit for this subcategory.

Minimal Spacing between Operable Doors

The Applicant has agreed to provide a number of direct entrances for first floor units along Georgia and Blueridge Avenues. Along Georgia Avenue, entrances will be clustered in groups of three with spacing 15 and 20 feet between each group. Along Blueridge Avenue, in addition to the main building entrance, there are four direct entrances for first floor units with spacing between 13 and 22 feet. While the provision of entrances for ground floor units is a significant enhancement to the Project, Staff finds it is not equivalent to neighborhood-serving retail and professional offices as envisioned by the Sector Plan to encourage activity on the sidewalk. Therefore, Staff recommends partial credit for this subcategory.

Design Priorities of the Applicable Master Plan or Guidelines

The Design Guidelines folds the Sector Plan's design elements into the following three broad goals: Create an identifiable center, create appropriate transitions, and improve the public realm. Staff finds that the binding of architectural



APPENDIX A

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Director

March 21, 2014

Mr. Michael Brown, Senior Planner
Area 2 Planning Division
The Maryland-National Capital
Park & Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

RE: Sketch Plan No. 320140030
Avalon Bay Wheaton (Ava)

Michael:
Dear Mr Brown:

We have completed our review of the above-referenced sketch plan for this project. The following comments are tentatively set forth for the subsequent submission of a preliminary plan:

Note: All Planning Board Opinions relating to this plan or any subsequent revision, preliminary or site plans should be submitted to the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services in the package for record plats, storm drain, grading or paving plans, or application for access permit. Include this letter and all other correspondence from this department.

At the Preliminary Plan Stage:

1. Pay the MCDOT development review fee, as required by Montgomery County Resolution 16-405 and Executive Regulation 28-06AM.
2. Show all existing topographic details (paving, storm drainage, driveways adjacent and opposite the site, sidewalks and/or bikeways, utilities, rights of way and easements, etc.) on the preliminary plan.
3. Show dedication of right-of-way on Georgia Avenue in accordance with Resolution No. 17-952, Approval of Planning Board Draft Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan.
4. Show dedication of right-of-way on Elkin Street (P-31) in accordance with the Wheaton CBD Sector Plan [MC 2003.12] on the preliminary plan.
5. Show necessary dedication of right-of-way on Blueridge Avenue (B-15) in accordance with the Wheaton CBD Sector Plan on the preliminary plan. (Note: Blueridge Avenue is designated as a proposed "signed shared roadway" in the Wheaton CBD Sector Plan. [MC 2005.02]). The existing cross-section includes four travel lanes and no parking. Given that the sector plan

Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations

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proposes only two vehicular travel lanes, we propose eliminating two of the existing four travel lanes (while maintaining a westbound left turn lane at Georgia Avenue and eastbound left turn lane at Elkin Street), accommodating bike lanes on both sides of the roadway, and incorporating a two-way left turn lane. For this cross-section to be acceptable, the forthcoming preliminary plan must ensure adequate alignment with for approach and receiving lanes and traffic controls.

From the north side to the south side of Blue Ridge Avenue show:

- a. 9' sidewalk (from property line based on a 0' building restriction line)
 - b. 6' planter area
 - c. 5' bike lane
 - d. 10' westbound travel lane
 - e. 10' two-way left turn lane
 - f. 10' eastbound travel lane
 - g. 5' bike lane
 - h. 6' planter area
 - i. 7' sidewalk
 - j. 2' maintenance buffer (south side)
6. Provide storm drainage and/or flood plain studies, with computations. Evaluate the capacity of the existing public storm drain system and the impact of the additional runoff in the build condition. Include spread computations and inlet efficiency in the impact analysis.
 7. Grant necessary slope and drainage easements. Slope easements are to be determined by study or set at the building restriction line.
 8. Show the access configuration of proposed driveway and truck loading space on the preliminary plan.

For safe simultaneous movement of vehicles, we recommend a driveway pavement width of no less than twenty four (24) feet to allow vehicles to enter and exit the site without encroaching on the opposing lanes. This width will permit an inbound lane width of fourteen (14) feet and an exit lane width of ten (10) feet.

9. Improvements along Georgia Avenue (MD 97) as required by the Maryland State Highway Administration.
10. Improvements in the public rights-of-way will need to comply with Executive Regulation No. 31-08AM ("Context Sensitive Road Design").

The preliminary plan submission should address how this Executive Regulation has been satisfied – particularly with respect to target speeds, typical sections for the existing and proposed public streets, locations of existing and proposed public utilities, and stormwater management within the public rights-of-way.

11. At the preliminary plan stage, submit completed, executed MCDOT Sight Distances Evaluation certification form, for all existing and proposed site entrances onto County-maintained roads, for our review and approval.
12. Per the Wheaton CBD Sector Plan provide an ADA-compliant pedestrian connection through the site from Blueridge Avenue that connects to a pedestrian connection that links Elkin Street to Georgia Avenue. Grant Perpetual Public Access Easement for the pedestrian connection for use by the general public.

We recommend the path alignment proposed by the applicant at the January 29, 2014 meeting, which shows the pedestrian connection through the site terminating at the intersection of Blueridge Avenue & Elkin Street, as opposed to a mid-block location. This is a multi-way stop-controlled intersection with existing crosswalks and ADA ramps.

The alignment proposed on Page 61 (Map 17) in the Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan presents several safety & operational concerns when incorporated with the current Sketch Plan concept. We are particularly concerned with this creating the potential for mid-block crossings on a downgrade in close proximity to Georgia Avenue. Additionally, crossing pedestrians would not only contend with through traffic on Blueridge Avenue, but also with ingress-egress traffic at the existing Montgomery County parking lot and the proposed garage access and truck loading space for the site.

MCDOT has strong concerns with terminating the proposed pedestrian path at the mid-block location with the sketch plan as currently proposed. However, we could support the "sector plan alignment" for the pedestrian path with the following conditions:

- a. Relocate both the garage access and truck loading space to Elkin Street. If this relocation is not feasible, the applicant will need to provide satisfactory documentation explaining the perceived problems.

- b. Work with MCDOT and M-NCPPC to develop an approved streetscape concept to be implemented by the applicant that provides for a signed & marked crossing with a refuge island at the mid-block location (in the proposed two-way left turn lane), combined with the recommended cross-section (see Comment #4).
- c. Should the relocation of the garage access and truck loading space not be accommodated, we would be reluctantly open to the applicant proposing and implementing a concept that achieves the signed & marked mid-block crossing, while limiting vehicle-pedestrian conflicts to the extent acceptable by MCDOT.

If the applicant cannot develop a concept that adequately addresses MCDOT concerns for pedestrian safety at this location, we cannot support the sector plan alignment for the pedestrian path in conjunction with the proposed sketch plan concept.

- 13. Relocation of utilities along existing roads to accommodate the required roadway improvements shall be the responsibility of the applicant.
- 14. Coordinate with the appropriate public utility company representatives to determine the requirement for Public Utilities Easements along Georgia Avenue, Blueridge Avenue, and Elkin Street. We support requiring the applicant to submit a color-coded utility concept plan as part of the preliminary plan package for coordinated review.
- 15. In those situations where provision of a public utility easement is not feasible due to zero-foot building setbacks, MCDOT will work with the M-NCPPC, the applicant, and the public utility companies to ascertain the best location for utility service to the buildings. MCDOT's preference for the location of underground "dry" utilities is as follows, in order of priority:
 - a. In alleys and privately owned open space behind the buildings where access by utility maintenance vehicles is available.
 - b. Under the sidewalk between the building and the street.
 - c. Under the on-street parking lanes.
 - d. Under a travel lane.
- 16. Coordinate with Messrs. Larry Cole (301-495-4528) and/or David Anspacher (301-495-2191) of the Functional Planning & Policy Division regarding impacts related to the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan (i.e., Georgia Avenue North, Route 4a).
- 17. Coordinate with Ms. Ana Lopez van Balen, Mid-County Regional Services Center Director (240-777-8108), and DPS Right-of-Way Plan Review regarding proposed streetscape design and materials.

18. Coordinate with Ms. Sandra Brecher, Chief of the Division of Transit Services/Commuter Services Section (240-777-8380) to promote all non-auto modes of transportation. These efforts will include dissemination of information from MCDOT and allowing Commuter Services access to buildings and/or building management for the dissemination of information about transportation options – i.e, distribution of brochures, bus schedules, e-newsletters, etc., and periodic scheduled on-site presentations by MCDOT staff. Once Wheaton is established as a Transportation Management District, the applicant must participate in the TMD by entering into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement with MCDOT and MNCPPC.

Transportation demand elements in this residential Project should include but not be limited to:

- a. Parking - Check provisions of CR Zone to ensure parking is at the minimum level possible under those provisions.
 - b. Car Sharing Parking. Provide adequate number of car sharing vehicle parking spaces in highly visible, preferentially-located spots.
 - c. Electric Car Charging - Provide two electric car charging stations on site.
 - d. Displays - Provide opportunity and connections for electronic display screens and Real Time Transit Information Signs in lobbies, elevators, and parking facilities. This will enable outreach to building tenants, employees, visitors, etc.
 - e. Bikesharing - Given the proximity of the project to the Wheaton Metro station and the likely expansion of bikeshare to Wheaton in the future, the Applicant should coordinate with MCDOT to provide a location of a bikeshare station within the Project. The site should be planned to accommodate a 19-dock bikesharing station. Applicant will pay the capital cost of such station and twelve (12) years of operating expenses. Applicant will take other actions in concert with MCDOT to promote use of bikesharing among employees, residents and visitors at the Project. This would be an amenity that could be considered as meeting part of CR Zone provisions.
19. Truck loading space requirements are to be determined in accordance with the Executive Branch's "Off-Street Loading Space" policy.
 20. At the preliminary plan stage, submit a truck circulation plan for review by the M-NCPPC and MCDPS. Delineate truck turning movements on the plan. The forthcoming preliminary plan should delineate the proposed movements on-site between the anticipated access locations, the proposed truck loading spaces, and the proposed dumpsters. The truck circulation pattern and loading position should be designed for counter-clockwise entry and a left-side backing maneuver. Passenger vehicle travelways should be separated from the expected truck circulation patterns and storage areas. The applicant may also need to provide documentation of their proposed delivery schedules.

21. Consider additional alternatives for site and loading access. The proposed location which is on a downgrade and in close proximity to Georgia Avenue may present safety and/or operational issues.
22. In general, driveways and intersections are to be spaced opposite one another or located at least one hundred feet apart (see the potentially offset entrances for the proposed site and the parking lot driveway on the south side of Blueridge Avenue). Any deviation from this standard would necessitate a design exception request.
23. Depict more clearly the primary and secondary entrances for pedestrians to the site.
24. For any parking facility containing more than fifty (50) parking spaces, the applicant needs to furnish bicycle parking facilities as required Section 59 E-2.3 of the Montgomery County Code. Accordingly, the applicant should provide either bike lockers or inverted "U" type bike racks.
25. Permit and bond will be required as a prerequisite to MCDPS approval of the record plat. The permit will include, but not necessarily be limited to the following improvements:
 - a. Improvements along Blueridge Avenue, per the above Comment #4.
 - b. Improvements along Elkin Street to be determined at the preliminary plan stage.
 - c. Improvements to the public right of way, if any are required, will be determined at the preliminary plan stage based on a review of the additional information requested earlier in this letter.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this plan. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact Mr. William Haynes, our Development Review Area Engineer for this project, at william.haynes@montgomerycountymd.gov or (240) 777-2132.

Sincerely,



Gregory M. Leck, Manager
Development Review Team

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GML:wh

Mr. Michael Brown
Sketch Plan No. 320140030
March 21, 2014
Page 7

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Chris Helsabeck Avalon Bay Communities, Inc.
William Landfair VIKA Maryland, LLC
Mark Keeley Traffic Concepts, Inc.
Robert Harris Lerch, Early & Brewer
Cynthia Bar Lerch, Early & Brewer
Preliminary Plan folder
Preliminary Plan letters notebook

cc-e: Glenn Kreger M-NCPPC Area 2
Khalid Afzal M-NCPPC Area 2
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