



Bethesda Metro Center, Consent Project Plan Amendment No. 91992004F and Consent Site Plan Amendment No. 81988045D



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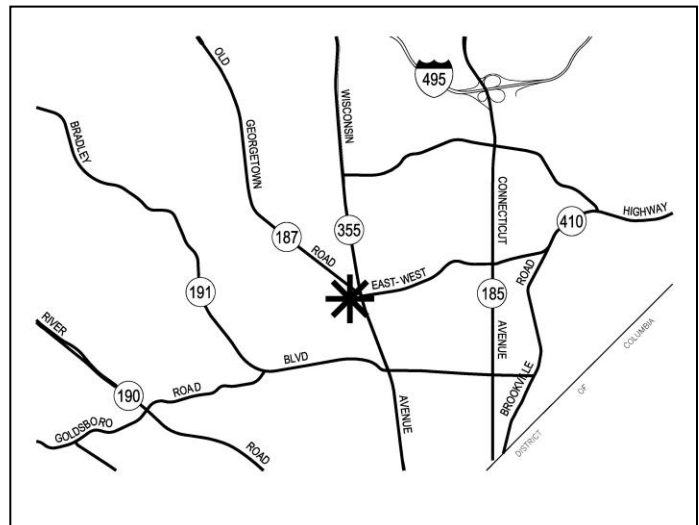


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Description

Staff Report Date: 05/13/16

- Amendment for the addition of 1,000 square feet of retail/restaurant uses to the Hyatt hotel building with a corresponding reduction to the approved building area for the office building at 3 Bethesda Metro Center, associated landscape and hardscape modifications, and parking calculations;
- Located at 1 Bethesda Metro Center, on the west side of the intersection of Old Georgetown Road, Wisconsin Avenue, and East-West Highway;
- 4.34 gross acres (3.48 net acres) zoned CBD-3 in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan Area;
- Applicant: The Meridian Group;
- Acceptance Date: March 31, 2016;
- Review Basis: Section 59-D-3.7 of 2004 Zoning Ordinance.



Summary

- This Application is being reviewed under the CBD-3 Zone development standards in effect on October 29, 2014, as permitted under Section 59.7.7.1.B.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Staff received no correspondence regarding this Amendment.
- Staff recommends approval of the consent Project Plan Amendment and Site Plan Amendment.

SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of Project Plan Amendment 91992004F and Site Plan Amendment No. 81998045D, Bethesda Metro Center, for the addition of 1,000 square feet of retail/restaurant uses to the Hyatt hotel building with a corresponding reduction to the approved building area for the office building at 3 Bethesda Metro Center on the same lot. This amendment also includes changes to the lighting and hardscaping adjacent to the reconfigured space and updates the site parking calculations to reflect the retail/restaurant square footage that is being added and the reduction of office square footage on the property. All site development elements shown on the latest electronic version as of the date of this Staff Report submitted via ePlans to the M-NCPPC are required.

SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

Site Vicinity

The Subject Property is located on Wisconsin Avenue at the western terminus of East West Highway and is directly above the Bethesda Metro Station and Metro Bus facilities, as well as a below-grade parking garage.

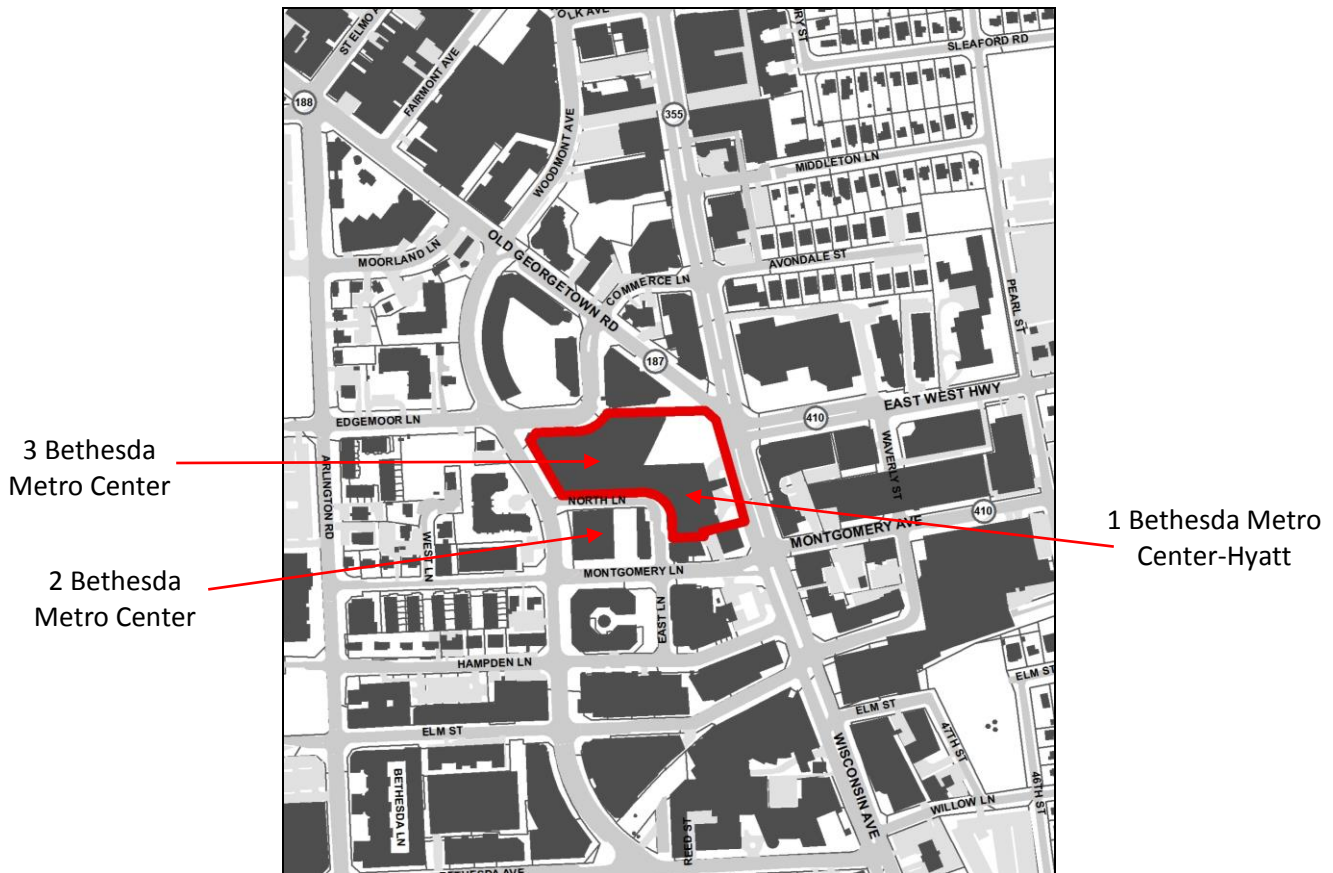


Figure 1 - Vicinity Map

The site is surrounded by office and retail/service uses in the heart of a primarily commercial area of Downtown Bethesda. The Clark Building is directly north, the Lorenz Building and Post Office Building

are directly south as well as some smaller commercial establishments. The Chevy Chase Building sits diagonally across the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road.



Figure 2-Site Aerial

The site is also located within walking distance of single family residential areas, both northeast and due west of the site.

Site Analysis

The subject site is currently developed with a 16-story, 381-room Hyatt hotel. There are no known rare, threatened, or endangered species on site. The historic Madonna of the Trail monument is located on the site.



Figure 3 - Existing Site, View from Wisconsin Avenue

Previous Approvals

The Planning Board approved Project Plan 919810050 on September 2, 1981, for a 231,164 square foot, 400-room hotel, as well as 400,110 square feet of mixed uses on 3.48 net acres.

The Planning Board approved Project Plan 919810070, amending the original Project Plan 919810050 on November 18, 1981. Project Plan 919810070 was given the new number when the amendment was submitted and approved the conversion of retail space to office uses, and minor changes that did not materially affect the design or development standards of the project.

On December 10, 1981, the Planning Board approved Site Plan 819810750, Bethesda Metro Center for a 231,164 square foot, 400-room hotel, as well as 334,110 square feet of office space and 66,000 square feet of retail uses on 3.57 acres in the CBD-3 zone.

In June 1988, an amendment was submitted to amend Site Plan 819810750. This Site Plan Amendment was given the new number of Site Plan 819880450. It was approved by the Planning Board on October 18, 1988, allowed for the conversion of mezzanine retail space to office space.

The Planning Board approved Project Plan 919920040 to amend the original Project Plan 919810050 on February 23, 1993, for an interim office use to occupy up to 6,000 square feet of retail space. Project Plan 919920040 was given the number when the amendment was submitted.

The Planning Board approved Project Plan 91992004A on July 28, 1994 to increase the previously approved 6,000 square feet of interim office space to 11,900 square feet within the Metro 3 Building.

The Planning Board approved Project Plan 91992004B on April 18, 1995 to permit an interim office use of an additional 3,562 square feet on the Metro Bus level of the Metro 3 Building.

The Planning Board approved Project Plan 91992004C on November 9, 1995 to permit an interim office use of 3,696 square feet on the Metro Bus level of the Metro 3 Building.

Site Plan Amendment 81988045A and Project Plan Amendment 91992004D were approved by the Planning Board on August 21, 2000, to allow all leasable area on the Plaza and Metrobus levels previously designated solely for retail uses, to be office use, except in certain specified places.

Site Plan Amendment 81988045B was approved by the Planning Board on November 15, 2001, to upgrade the plaza and for an additional 1,500 square feet of retail use.

Site Plan Amendment 81988045C was approved administratively on June 25, 2004, converting 1,770 square feet of the hotel lobby to a restaurant use for the expansion of the Morton's Restaurant located at the ground floor of the Hyatt.

The Planning Board denied Project Plan 91992004E (incorrectly designated 91992004B on the staff report and in the resolution) to amend the original Project Plan, on September 21, 2009.

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposal

The Amendment proposes to reconstruct the northeast corner of the hotel building, to add up to 1,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space to the 232,664-square-foot hotel, bringing the total square footage of the hotel after the addition to a maximum of 233,664 square feet. The total square footage of the development will remain the same with a corresponding reduction to the approved building area for the office building at 3 Bethesda Metro Center on the same lot. As part of the renovation of this northeast corner of the building, the outdoor hardscape and accent lighting will be modified. The proposed addition of planters, benches, accent lighting and updated pavers along the front of the hotel will enhance the appearance of the Property.

The Amendment also proposes that the parking calculations be updated to reflect the addition of 1,000 square feet of retail/restaurant uses to the site.

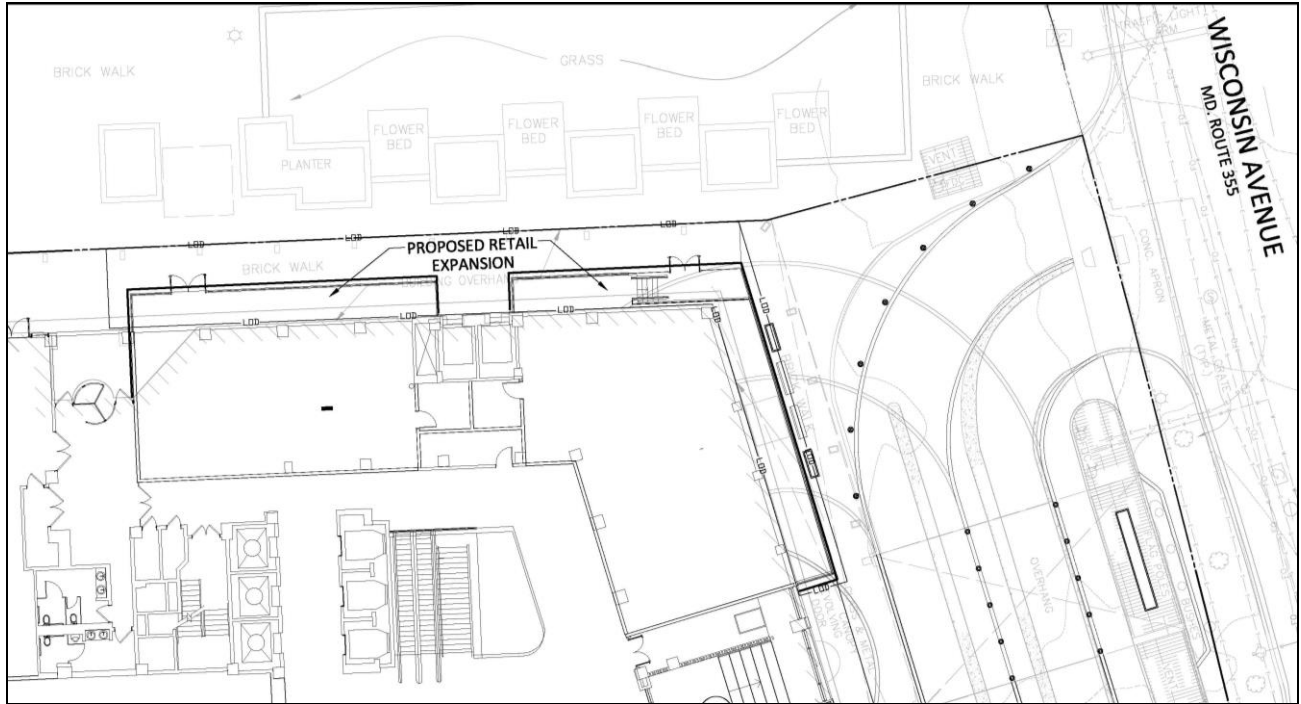


Figure 4 – Proposed Site Plan Amendment, retail expansion

Community Outreach

The Applicant has met all signage, noticing, and submission meeting requirements. The Applicant posted three signs on the Property regarding the subject Project Plan Amendment and Site Plan Amendment. A notice about the Amendment was sent on April 6, 2016. Staff has not received any correspondence on the proposed Amendments.

SECTION 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Section 7.7.1.B.3.a. of the Zoning Ordinance allows for an Applicant to amend any previously approved application under the development standards and procedures of the property's zoning on October 29, 2014, if the amendment: (i) does not increase the approved density or building height unless allowed under Section 7.7.1.C; and (ii) either: (a) retains at least the approved setback from property in a Residential Detached zone that is vacant or improved with a Single-Unit Living use; or (b) satisfies the setback required by its zoning on the date the Amendment or the permit is submitted. The Application complies with this section and accordingly, the Applicant seeks to amend the Project Plan and Site Plan approval under the standards of Section 59-C-2.42 of the Zoning Ordinance in effect on October 29, 2014.

Project Plan Amendment

The Amendment will add a maximum of 1,000 square feet of retail/restaurant space to the 232,664-square-foot hotel, bringing the total square footage of the hotel after the addition to a maximum of 233,664 square feet. This represents a less than one percent increase in gross square footage, and thus the square footage being added to the hotel's northeast corner will not significantly affect the building's use, character, or compatibility with its surroundings. The total square footage of the development will

remain the same with a corresponding reduction to the approved building area for the office building at 3 Bethesda Metro Center on the same lot as the hotel. The Amendment does not conflict with any conditions of approval and does not alter the intent, objectives, or requirements in the originally approved Project Plan, and as revised by previous amendments.

Site Plan Amendment

The Amendment proposes that the spaces at the northeast corner of the hotel building be “bumped out” with the walls of the existing building pushed outward to create an additional 1,000 square feet of enclosed space. Although the exterior walls will be moved outward, these extended spaces are still underneath an existing building overhang that currently shelters an arcade-type space, and thus the character of this portion of the building will not be significantly changed. The total square footage of the development will remain the same with a corresponding reduction to the approved building area for the office building at 3 Bethesda Metro Center on the same lot as the hotel. The Amendment also proposes that the plaza around this space be updated with new hardscaping and accent lighting. This will help to ensure that the building character remains largely unchanged, and that addition is wholly compatible with the surrounding area. Lastly, the Amendment proposes that site parking calculations be updated to reflect the marginal increase in square footage on the site. The Amendment does not conflict with any conditions of approval and does not alter the intent, objectives, or requirements in the originally approved Site Plan, and as revised by previous amendments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The proposed modifications to the Project Plan and Site Plan will not alter the overall character or impact of the development with respect to the original findings of approval. Further, these modifications will not affect the compatibility of the development with respect to the surrounding neighborhood. Staff recommends approval of Project Plan Amendment 91992004F and Site Plan Amendment 81988045D.