

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 21, 2006

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Rose Krasnow, Chief *RK*
Catherine Conlon, Supervisor *CC*
Development Review Division *DK*

FROM: Dolores Kinney, Senior Planner (301) 495-1321
Development Review

REVIEW TYPE: Preliminary Plan Review

APPLYING FOR: Resubdivision of Lots 1-11, 21-23

PROJECT NAME: 8021 Georgia Avenue

CASE #: 120060080 (Formerly 1-06008)

REVIEW BASIS: Chapter 50, Montgomery County Subdivision Regulations

ZONE: CBD-1

LOCATION: Located at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Burlington Avenue

MASTER PLAN: Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan

APPLICANT: WMATA by Cypress Realty Investments, LLC

ENGINEER: VIKA

ATTORNEY: Linowes and Blocher

HEARING DATE: May 4, 2006

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval, pursuant to Chapter 50 of the Montgomery County Subdivision Regulations, including the classification of Stoddard Place as an alley, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Approval under this preliminary plan is limited to 210 multi-family dwelling units including 27 MPDUs.
- 2) Compliance with conditions of approval for Project Plan #920060020.
- 3) Provide full width Type B streetscape improvements on Georgia Avenue and MD 410 in accordance with the Silver Spring Streetscape (April 1992) technical manual, or as amended.
- 4) Compliance with Historic Preservation conditions of approval letter dated February 2, 2006 as part of the site plan.
- 5) Final approval of the number and location of buildings, dwelling units, MPDUs, on-site parking, site circulation, sidewalks, and bikepaths will be determined at site plan.
- 6) Final design of the monolithic median, deceleration lane and diverter island for main access onto Burlington Avenue (MD 410) subject to Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) review and approval.
- 7) The applicant shall coordinate with the Montgomery County Departments of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), Fire and Rescue Services/Office of Code Enforcement and Permitting Services for design of Stoddard Place as an alleyway.
- 8) The applicant shall enter into a traffic mitigation agreement (TMA) to participate in the Silver Spring Transportation Management District (TMD). The agreement must be signed and executed by all parties prior to site plan approval.
- 9) The applicant shall reconfigure and extend the southwestern corner of the site at the intersection of Burlington Avenue and Georgia Avenue for improved pedestrian circulation and access across both Georgia Avenue (US 29) to the west and Burlington Avenue (MD 410) to the south.
- 10) This improvement shall be completed before any use and occupancy permit is issued.
- 11) The record plat shall reflect dedicate additional right-of-way along Burlington Avenue (MD 410) to equal 40 feet as measured from the centerline.
- 12) The applicant shall revise the preliminary plan to remove proposed ingress driveway on Burlington Avenue (MD 410) from plans for improved pedestrian access and in order to accommodate Silver Spring streetscape elements as requested by the Development Review Division.
- 13) The applicant shall lengthen and improve the existing centerline median along Burlington Avenue (MD 410), inclusive of a pedestrian refuge within the median for improved pedestrian safety and access across MD 410. This improvement shall be complete before any use and occupancy permit is issued.
- 14) Compliance with conditions of MCDPWT letter dated, March 7, 2006, unless otherwise amended.
- 15) Access and improvements as required to be approved by MDSHA prior to issuance of access permits.

- 16) Compliance with the conditions of approval of the MCDPS stormwater management approval dated October 11, 2005.
- 17) The Adequate Public Facility (APF) review for the preliminary plan will remain valid for sixty-one (61) months from the date of mailing of the Planning Board opinion.
- 18) Other necessary easements.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The property, identified as Lots 1 through 11 and Lots 21 through 23 (Subject Property), is located at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Burlington Avenue (Attachment A). The Subject Property contains a total tract area of 1.88 acres and is zoned CBD-1. The property is also the site of the historic Dyers and Cleaners Building, which will remain. Other structures that currently exist on the property will be removed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This is a preliminary plan application to create one (1) lot for the construction of 210 multi-family dwelling units including 27 MPDUs (Attachment B). This preliminary plan is reviewed concurrently with Project Plan #920060020. The site is exempt from forest conservation. Access to the site will be directly from Stoddard Place. The site will generate more than 30 peak hour weekday vehicle trips, therefore it is subject to a Local Area Transportation Review (LATR). The minimum required on-site public use space for this project is 10,227 square feet, or 20 percent of the net lot. The plan proposes 10,227 square feet of on-site public use space plus 6,862 square feet of streetscaping off-site. The plan proposes 33.41% of the net area of the Subject Property.

DISCUSSION:

Master Plan Compliance

The Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) Sector Plan encourages revitalization of the core, a residential downtown, a green downtown and a pedestrian friendly downtown, and also the reuse of historic resources. The proposed development is located on the former site of the National Association of Dyers and Cleaners, also known as the National Institute of Cleaning and Dyeing, and has recently been placed on the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County. The proposed preliminary plan complies with the recommendations adopted in the sector plan in that it proposes the redevelopment of property to contain 210 multi-family residential units on a site which is shared with the locally historic, National Institute of Cleaning and Dyeing, and provides landscaped areas and streetscaping.

Historic Preservation

The National Association of Dyers and Cleaners Institute buildings at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Burlington Avenue were constructed beginning in 1927 to promote research, training, and the business interests of the dying and dry cleaning profession. Currently consisting of five buildings, this complex exhibits an interesting mixture of Classical Revival, International and Mission stylistic influences. Designed by regionally renowned architect, Arthur B. Heaton in 1926, the buildings served for about 50 years as a national headquarters for similar state organizations to promote education, research, and political interests of the laundry and dry cleaning industries. These historic buildings are important for their architectural design and their association with Arthur B. Heaton, a nationally significant architect.

Transportation

Site Location, Access, Circulation, and Parking

The site is located on the east side of Georgia Avenue (US 29) north of its intersection with Burlington Avenue/East-West Highway (MD 410). The property is bounded by Georgia Avenue to the west, Burlington Avenue to the south and Stoddard Place to the north. The proposed development was tested for a maximum of 235 high-rise residential condominiums with all parking needs met on-site by means of an underground parking garage. The garage will be accessed exclusively from Stoddard Place, which has connection to northbound Georgia Avenue.

On-site pedestrian circulation is provided by sidewalks along northbound Georgia Avenue, the north side of Burlington Avenue and along the southern side of Stoddard Place. The site will provide improved pedestrian access across Burlington Avenue southward towards the recently expanded Montgomery College campus. The centerline median on Burlington Avenue will be extended and include a pedestrian refuge. In addition, the south-westernmost corner of the site will be reconfigured to allow for a larger landing area and improved visibility at the intersection of Georgia Avenue with East-West Highway.

The applicant initially requested two points of access: one each on Burlington Avenue (MD 410) and Stoddard Place. Neither roadway allows for standard entrance designs or operations, therefore extensive negotiations were held to determine the feasibility and viability of both access points. The following sections will discuss in greater detail the reasoning behind the staff recommendations.

Burlington Avenue Access

Burlington Avenue (MD 410) serves as the connecting leg of East-West Highway between Georgia Avenue and Fenton Street. It is marked by the presence of a concrete bridge spanning the CSX and Metrorail tracks. The short distance of approximately 800 feet between Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue, in combination with the necessary

height clearance over the railroad tracks creates a steep hill¹ mid-way between the two intersections (please see photos below).

The proposed location for the entrance on Burlington Avenue would be 110 feet to the east of the intersection with Georgia Avenue and at the base of the vertical curve that comprises the bridge over the railroad tracks. This location (and subsequent alternate locations on Burlington) does not meet the minimum stopping sight distance per SHA requirements and, therefore, is not a permitted location for exiting vehicles.

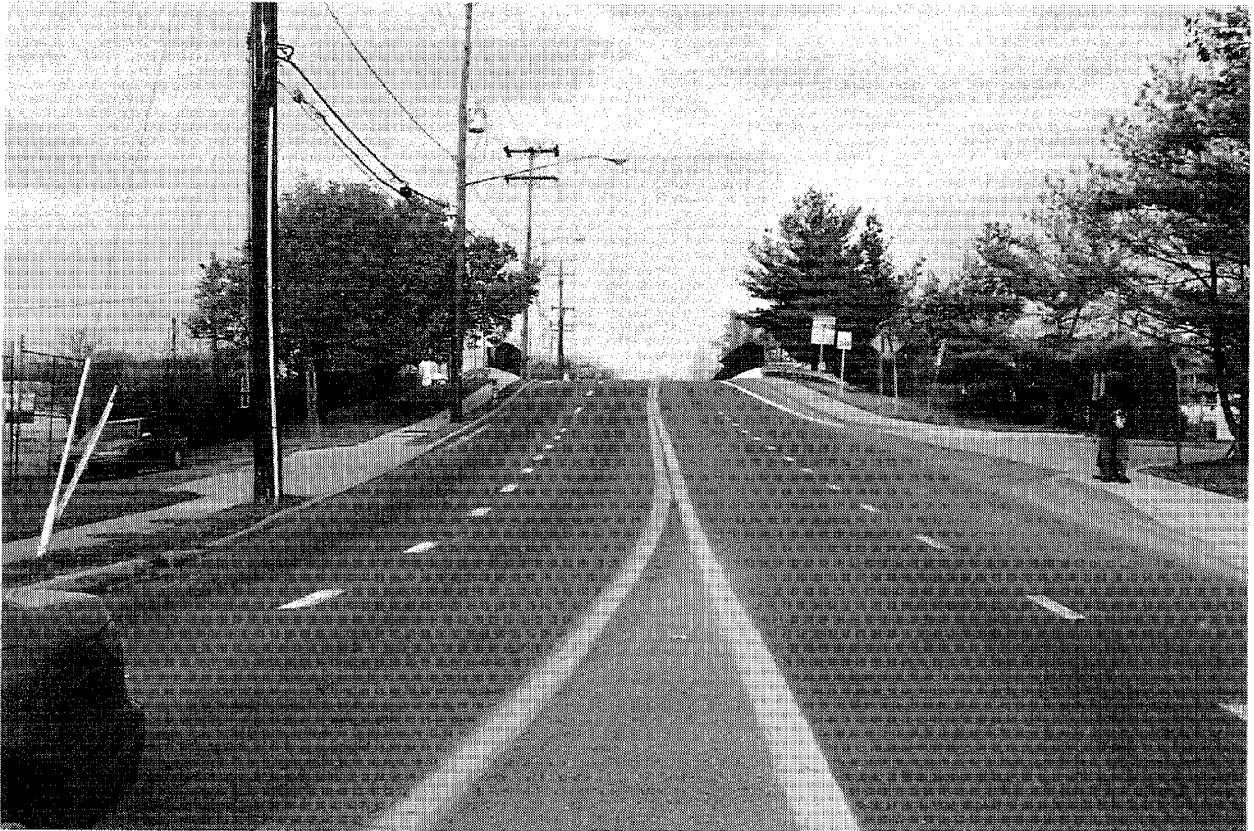


Photo 1. Burlington Avenue (MD 410) eastbound from intersection with Georgia Avenue.

¹ Separate, independent surveys of this hill have shown its grade to vary between 5.5% and 6.5% between the proposed site entrance and the crest of the bridge.

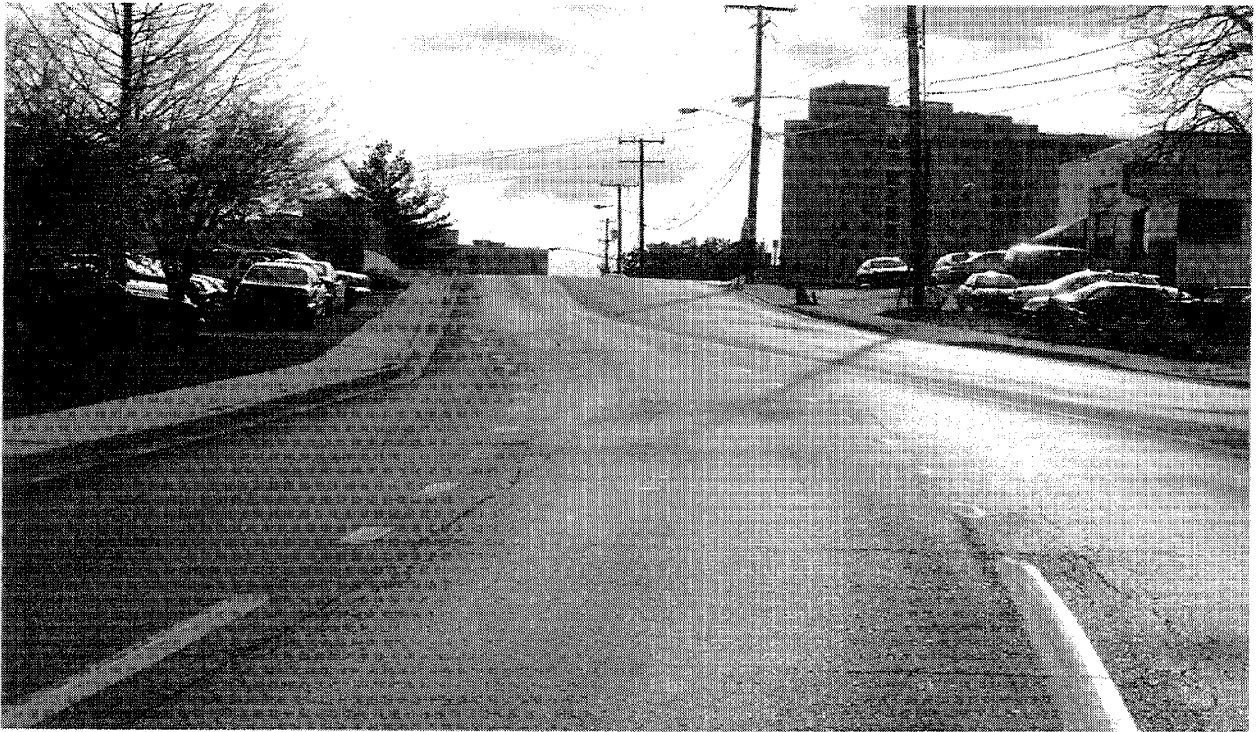


Photo 2. Burlington Avenue (MD 410) westbound from intersection with Fenton Street.

In response, the applicant proposed to have an entrance only (i.e. no outbound movements) on Burlington Avenue. The proposed point of access would serve as an alternate entrance for the parking garage in addition to full access from Stoddard Place. SHA conceptually approved this alternative, provided certain design criteria were met. The revised preliminary plan with the proposed entrance did not meet SHA minima for deceleration lane lengths, widths or turning radii. However, as the site is physically constrained, both in overall dimension and on account of the historic buildings to be preserved, SHA approved the entrance location in their comment letter dated March 21, 2006.

Subsequently, staff sought to incorporate SHA comments regarding the design of the proposed deceleration lane and entrance with Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) objectives for Silver Spring streetscape and pedestrian accessibility. The resulting design reconfigured the frontage along Burlington Avenue (MD 410) to provide for sidewalks, streetscape and vehicular access, however, it was neither wholly compliant with SHA design standards nor stated Commission objectives for pedestrian access and Silver Spring streetscape elements, nor recommended civil engineering practice. Development Review and Transportation Planning staff ultimately determined that providing vehicular access into the site from Burlington Avenue was not worth the cost in terms of compromised streetscape design, loss of public open space and diminished levels of access for both vehicles and pedestrians. Elimination of the proposed entrance would allow for improved pedestrian access and standard Silver Spring streetscape design elements. Therefore, staff recommends removal of the proposed point of access onto the site from Burlington Avenue.

Stoddard Place Access

Stoddard Place is currently a cul-de-sac with a right-of-way width of 30 feet. It is not a classified master planned street and as such, would require a minimum of 60 feet right-of-way to comply with DPWT Business Street standards (please see photo 3 below). Due to the close proximity of the roadway to the existing buildings on-site, Stoddard Place cannot be widened without the removal of one of the historical structures. The applicant has requested that Stoddard Place be reclassified as an alleyway to allow for less stringent design standards. After extensive negotiations, DPWT has agreed to reclassify Stoddard Place as an alleyway.

Stoddard Place will serve as the only point of vehicular access to the site, with provision for both resident and service vehicles. Staff requests that the applicant install sidewalks along the site frontage of Stoddard Place to allow for improved pedestrian access. As the dimensions of Stoddard Place do not meet the minimum standards for Business Streets or Primary Residential Streets, staff also asks that the applicant work with personnel from DPWT and from Fire and Rescue Services to ensure adequate provision for emergency vehicles.



Photo 3. View eastbound on Stoddard Place towards Georgia Avenue

Local Area Transportation Review

The 8021 Georgia Avenue development submitted an LATR traffic study in accordance with M-NCPPC policies stated in the LATR Guidelines adopted in July of 2004. The proposed development is estimated to generate 71 additional trips during the AM and PM weekday peak periods of travel.

Three signalized intersections adjacent to the development were selected for analysis: Georgia Avenue (US 29) at Sligo Avenue, Georgia Avenue (US 29) at East-West Highway (MD 410)/Burlington Avenue/13th Street, and Burlington Avenue/Philadelphia Avenue at Fenton Street. In addition, the unsignalized intersection of Stoddard Place and Georgia Avenue (US 29) was also studied. All intersections are estimated to operate below the 1,800 CLV threshold. Therefore, the proposed development will meet the requirements of LATR. The following table shows the CLV analysis results for the studied intersections:

<u>Roadway Intersection</u>	Current CLV levels (AM / PM)	Background CLV levels (AM / PM)	Projected Future CLV (AM / PM)
Georgia Ave (US 29)/ Sligo Ave	872/1,029	909/1,067	910/1,074
Georgia Ave (US 29)/ East-West Highway (MD 410)	1372/1,256	1,526/1,413	1546/1,429
Philadelphia Ave/ Burlington Ave/Fenton Street	1,253/1,093	1,346/1,205	1,351/1,228
Georgia Avenue (US 29)/Stoddard Place	381/631	398/642	432/670

The traffic study estimated that a portion (29 out of the 71) of the peak hour trips would exit onto westbound Burlington Avenue, under the assumption that an exit driveway would be approved. When these estimated outbound trips are relocated to the intersection of Stoddard Place with Georgia Avenue, no significant change in the CLV calculations occurs. As the traffic study originally directed all entering traffic to Stoddard Place, the removal of the proposed entrance from Burlington Avenue does not alter the findings and conclusions expressed in the traffic study. Staff estimates that CLV for the intersection of Stoddard Place with Georgia Avenue has sufficient capacity to absorb all of the estimated peak hour trips.

Master Plan Roadways and Bikeways

Georgia Avenue is a major highway with 125 feet of right-of-way in the vicinity of the site. Burlington Avenue (MD 410) is a state arterial roadway of recommended 80 feet of right-of-way. The applicant has agreed to dedicate right-of-way to provide 40 feet from the centerline of Burlington Avenue to insure compliance with the Sector Plan. Stoddard Place is a Business Street of substandard width of 30 feet. Due to the historic

buildings located on the site, the applicant cannot dedicate right-of-way to provide the recommended minimum right-of-way for a standard Business Street cross section. Instead, Stoddard Place is to be reclassified an alleyway with a pavement width of 28 feet and a right-of-way width of 30 feet, enabling its current dimensions to remain unchanged.

Pedestrian Access

All adjacent intersections have marked pedestrian crosswalks. The three signalized intersections reviewed for the LATR study have adequate crossing times and clearly marked crosswalks for pedestrians. The proposed development will connect to the existing network of pedestrian facilities in this area of downtown Silver Spring.

Community Outreach

The applicant met with the Silver Spring Historical Society on April 12, 2005; the Commercial and Economic Development Committee of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board on September 12, 2005; the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Board on September 2005; the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Board on September 15, 2005; the Silver Spring Chamber of commerce on November 15, 2005; and the east Silver Spring Citizens Association on December 19, 2005.

Citizen Correspondence

The Development Review Division (DRD) received a letter from a citizen dated March 24, 2005 expressing opposition to the proposed preliminary plan. Mr. Thomas F. Jennings, the author of the letter, indicated that the ground floor of the proposed building should contain a retail component to accommodate the potential increase of foot traffic due to future redevelopment in the area.

The proposed plan for a hundred percent (100%) residential project is consistent with the zone. Therefore, Staff supports the proposed preliminary plan.

ANALYSIS

Staff's review of Preliminary Plan #120060080, 8021 Georgia Avenue, indicates that the plan conforms to the Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan. The proposed preliminary plan is consistent with the sector plan goal to encourage revitalization and high-density development in the central business district. Staff also finds that the proposed preliminary plan complies with Chapter 50 of the Montgomery County Code, Subdivision Regulations as demonstrated in the Data Table (Attachment C), in that public facilities will be adequate to support and service the area of the proposed subdivision. Staff further finds that the size, width, shape, and orientation of the proposed lot is appropriate for the location of the subdivision.

CONCLUSION:

Staff concludes that Preliminary Plan #120060080 (formerly 1-06008), 8021 Georgia Avenue, conforms to the land use objectives of the Silver Spring CBD Sector

Plan and meets all necessary requirements of the Subdivision Regulations. The plan was reviewed by all applicable agencies and they have recommended approval (Attachment D). As such, Staff recommends approval of the preliminary plan, subject to the above conditions.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A	Vicinity Map
Attachment B	Preliminary Plan
Attachment C	Data Table
Attachment D	Agency Correspondence
Attachment E	Citizen's Correspondence