

## DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

### ANALYSIS: Conformance to Master Plan

Community-Based Planning staff recommends approval of the Preliminary and Site Plans and is in conformance with the approved and adopted Kensington/Wheaton Master Plan and Local Map Amendment rezoning petition for the Good Counsel site [G-798] with the following conditions:

1. Create a separate lot to accommodate the reservation of the Rafferty Center to allow a public entity to assume responsibility of the Center.
2. Submit an alternative site plan without the Rafferty Center that illustrates a redesigned open play area and residential development.
3. All Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) should be spread throughout the development.

The proposed development is located within the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan area and is adjacent to the Wheaton Central Business District (CBD) Vicinity Plan Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan (1989), which includes the following language:

- ❑ To protect and stabilize the extent, location and character of the existing residential and commercial land use.
- ❑ To maintain the well established low-to-medium density residential character, which prevails over most of the planning area.
- ❑ To ensure that zoning and land use recommendation for sites which have a potential for future development are consistent with the goals of land use stabilization and compatibility with nearby existing development.
- ❑ To preserve the identity of residential areas along major highway corridors, to soften the impact of major highways on adjacent homes and to strengthen the distinction between commercial and residential uses.

The development will strengthen the transition between commercial uses in the CBD with another residential area along a major highway and will be compatible to the existing area. Additionally, the Green Corridor Policy of the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan, which aims to ensure that “integrity of residential areas along major highway corridors and that commercial areas do not fade from one into the next without a clear sense of place” will occur given the proposed streetscape and open play area adjacent to the Rescue Squad. The Leesborough development would achieve the land use and zoning objectives of the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan. A mix of townhouses and one-family detached dwellings, one-family attached dwellings with significant green area, including community open space, would maintain a low to medium density with the surrounding multi-family and single-family communities.

**ANALYSIS: Conformance to Development Standards**

**PROJECT DATA TABLE**

Zoning: RT-15  
 Proposed Use: 139 one-family attached, 6 one-family detached and 45 multi-family condominium dwelling units  
 Development Method: RT-15 with MPDUs  
 Total Site Area: 13.86 acres

<u>Development Standard</u>	<u>Permitted or Required</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Permitted Density:	201*	190 (139 one-family attached, 6 one-family detached & 45 multi-family condos)
Minimum Tract Area:	1.0 ac.	13.86 ac.
Coverage Limitations: (%)		
Min. Green Space	30%	46%
Community Open Space:	2.0 ac.*	2.6 ac.
Max. Building Height (ft.):	35	35
Minimum Building Setbacks (ft.):		
From any public street	20	
Georgia Avenue		55 *
Amherst Avenue		50 *
From any adjoining lot:		
Side/end unit	8	8
Rear	20	20
Parking:		
Residential	380spaces	472 spaces
(2 spaces per unit @ 190 units)		

\*Binding Element of G-798

## MPDU CALCULATIONS

MPDUs Required @ 12.5%	24 dwelling units
MPDUs Provided	24 dwelling units

## RECREATION CALCULATIONS

	<u>Tots</u>	<u>children</u>	<u>teens</u>	<u>adults</u>	<u>seniors</u>
<i>Demand Points (Required per 100 d.u.'s)</i>					
SFD III (6)	0.80	1.10	1.40	7.60	0.80
Townhouses (139)	23.6	30.60	25.0	179.0	9.70
Garden Units (45)	<u>5.00</u>	<u>6.30</u>	<u>5.40</u>	<u>53.10</u>	<u>7.20</u>
<b>Total Demands Pts.</b>	<b>29.40</b>	<b>38.00</b>	<b>31.80</b>	<b>239.70</b>	<b>17.70</b>
<i>Supply Points</i>					
<u>On-Site Facilities:</u>					
Pedestrian system	2.9	7.60	6.30	107.40	8.00
Open Play Area I	6.00	9.00	12.00	30.00	2.00
Tot Lot	9.00	2.00	0.00	4.00	1.00
Indoor Community Space (Rafferty Bldg)	2.90	5.70	9.50	71.60	7.10
Picnic/Sitting Areas (6)	<u>6.00</u>	<u>6.00</u>	<u>9.0</u>	<u>30.00</u>	<u>12.00</u>
<b>Total On-Site Supply</b>	<b>26.80</b>	<b>30.30</b>	<b>36.80</b>	<b>243.00</b>	<b>30.10</b>
Total Off-Site Credit	9.40*	10.60*	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Supply Points</b>	<b>36.20</b>	<b>40.90</b>	<b>36.80</b>	<b>243.00</b>	<b>30.10</b>
Percent of Requirements	123%	108%	116%	102%	170%

\*Off-site credit is being taken (max. 35%) for Wheaton Regional Park, Wheaton Community Center.

**FINDINGS for Site Plan Review:**

1. *The site plan is consistent with an approved Development Plan or a project plan for the optional method of development, if required.*

The site plan is consistent with the approved Schematic Development Plan and binding elements as part of the Re-Zoning Classification for the RT-15 Zone (G-798) approved by Resolution No. 15-226 on June 17, 2003.

2. *The site plan meets all of the requirements of the zone in which it is located.*

The Site Plan meets all of the requirements of the RT-15 Zone as demonstrated in the Project Data Table above.

3. *The locations of the buildings and structures, the open spaces, the landscaping, recreation facilities, and the pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems are adequate, safe and efficient.*

- a. **Location of Buildings and Structures**

The location of the buildings is adequate and efficient to the surrounding road network and urban setting. The buildings were designed to provide frontage on the primary roads with the rear of the property being served by private alleys. The front of the buildings have been placed as close to the street frontage as possible while still allowing for steps, street trees and lights as well as amenity landscaping and features such as ornamental fencing.

Twenty-four Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU's) have been selectively integrated into the framework of the market rate townhouse and condominium units. This provides for a mix of design and unit type within each block.

The applicant will negotiate the transfer of ownership of the Rafferty Center building to the Montgomery County Department of Recreation by the end of a reservation period established between the two parties and conditioned on the preliminary plan. If retained, the Rafferty Center will be maintained by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation as conditioned by the Development Plan and binding elements of the zoning reclassification for maintenance by a public entity.

The applicant is being required to provide an alternate plan to show how the recreation requirements are being satisfied if the Rafferty Center is not retained since credit is being taken for proposed activity within the building. The revised plan would be reviewed by M-NCPPC staff prior to release of the 133<sup>rd</sup> building permit through a site plan amendment process. This revised plan may impact or change the location of some of the proposed units and open space.

b. Open Spaces

Open space for this project is adequate, safe, and efficient and provides the necessary buffers to adjacent properties and uses while meeting the requirements of the zone.

Binding element number 13 of the rezoning classification required that two acres of community space be provided along the northern boundary of the site. The two acres could include reforestation areas; open play areas, as well as the Rafferty Center. The location of the open space provides for a buffer to the adjacent residential properties that front on Arcola Avenue and a physical separation from the Wheaton Rescue Squad to the proposed units on the site. The open space that provides the separation from the residences will be placed in a Category I forest conservation easement and planted with oversized plant material for a more effective screen. The open space situated around the Rafferty Center will include an open play area, tot lot and seating areas for the community.

If the Rafferty Center is not retained by Montgomery County, the applicant will provide Staff a revised layout that demonstrates how the additional open space and recreation amenities will be accommodated for the subdivision.

Additional open space is provided at the center of the site in the shape of a central plaza visually prominent to the residents of the site. The internal green space between the fronts of the townhouse units will form a mews setting with ornamental planting and private sitting areas.

c. Landscaping and Lighting

The landscaping and lighting proposed is adequate and efficient.

Landscaping consists of a complement of street trees in tree panels along Dawson Avenue, the primary entry into the property from Georgia Avenue. This streetscape is a formal treatment with 10-foot-wide stamped concrete that terminates into a private amenity plaza at the intersection with Street 'D'. The remainder of the private streets contains shade trees at the intersections and near the parallel parking bays. The alleys consist of primarily flowering trees, shrubs and groundcover to provide definition and scale in the islands. Conditions have also been placed on the site plan to allow for screening of above ground utilities in the parking islands. The mews areas in the front of the townhouse units will include centralized seating areas and ornamental tree and shrubs.

The eight-foot-wide bike path along Georgia Avenue includes a staggered double row of Zelkovas for the entire property frontage, while Amherst Avenue contains the

standard street trees at 50 feet on center. The formal open play area in front of the Rafferty Center is lined with shade trees to define the oval walkway and create an entry to the building.

Additional landscaping is provided for screening along the property boundaries to buffer the adjacent apartment complex to the north. Landscaping is also provided at the end of the alleys for the condo units for screening of potential development on the WMATA property. Plant material in the afforestation area at the northern end of the property has been increased in size from the typical planting requirement for screening of adjacent one-family detached units. This planted buffer area is approximately 50-feet in width.

Nineteen foot-tall poles, including fixture and mounting height, are proposed along the primary entrances and interior loop roads for safety of the residents of the units. Reflectors and refractors of the fixtures will be installed on all lights in proximity to residential properties to negate glare.

d. Recreation

The proposed recreational facilities are adequate, safe and efficient.

The applicant is providing a tot lot, open play area, pedestrian system and indoor community space within the Rafferty Center to satisfy the requirements of the Recreation Guidelines. The applicant needs the Rafferty Center to satisfy their recreation requirements. Off-site credit is being taken for activity areas in Wheaton Regional Park and Wheaton Community Center.

The tot lot and open play area are located in the northwest corner of the site directly in front of the Rafferty Center. In addition to seating near the tot lot, three other seating areas have been incorporated into amenity plaza areas located at the intersecting streets for visibility and use.

The applicant is required to provide an alternate plan to show how the recreation requirements will be satisfied if the Rafferty Center is not retained since credit is being taken for proposed activity within the building. The revised plan would be reviewed by M-NCPPC staff prior to release of the 133<sup>rd</sup> building permit through a minor amendment process. The plan would need to address location of the recreation amenities, open space and relation to existing and proposed units.

e. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation is adequate, safe, and efficient, providing

pedestrian connections and crossings on the private streets.

Vehicular circulation consists of two access points from Georgia Avenue and Amherst Avenue. The streets will be 24-foot-wide private roads. The entrance from Georgia Avenue is a direct line into the site terminating at a T-intersection, which forms a loop road that connects to the access point at Amherst Avenue. Private courts and alleys serve all of the townhouse, condo and one-family detached units. Nearly all of the unit types have rear-loaded garages except for the townhouse units on the southern boundary adjacent to the existing apartment complex at Blueridge Manor.

Although the Rafferty Center will be preserved and maintained by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, there is no public vehicular circulation for the building. The present concept is that civic and community groups will be permitted to park in the surface parking facility behind the Wheaton Rescue Squad for events and meetings.

Pedestrian circulation consists of 4-foot-wide sidewalks adjacent to the private drives through the site to serve all of the units. A direct pedestrian system connects the primary entry from Georgia Avenue to Amherst Avenue through the site. A sidewalk connects the Rafferty Center to the surface parking facility that is part of the Wheaton Rescue Squad currently under construction. A connection is also being made to Elkin Street at the southeastern property corner for a more direct route to the post office and commercial retail shops.

The site plan also incorporates improvements for pedestrian circulation via an 8-foot-wide Class I bikeway within the right-of-way on Georgia Avenue. The bikeway will provide greater pedestrian circulation to downtown Wheaton and the metro and bus stations.

4. *Each structure and use is compatible with other uses and other site plans and with existing and proposed adjacent development.*

The locations of the buildings are compatible with existing uses and adjacent development.

The proposed mix of one-family detached and attached uses to the north, south and east are compatible with the surrounding development comprised of primarily of one-family detached units to the north and west and multi-family to the south. The multi-family units along Georgia Avenue and on the southwestern boundary create an area of low-to-medium density that is in keeping with the transitional neighborhood to the south.

The mix of unit styles serves as a transition from the apartment and commercial uses to the south and one-family detached units to the north and east of the site.

5. *The site plan meets all applicable requirements of Chapter 22A regarding forest conservation.*

The planting requirement of 2.08 acres will satisfy the forest conservation requirements through a combination of on-site landscaping and off-site forest plantings for optional method projects. The afforestation area will be placed in a Category I forest conservation easement and will consist of 2" caliper trees, providing a substantial buffer to the adjacent one-family detached homes north of the site.

## **APPENDIX**

- B. Rafferty Center memorandums from Montgomery County and Linowes and Blocher
- B. Binding Elements of Re-Zoning Application G-798 and Resolution No. 15-226
- C. Memorandums from other agencies