






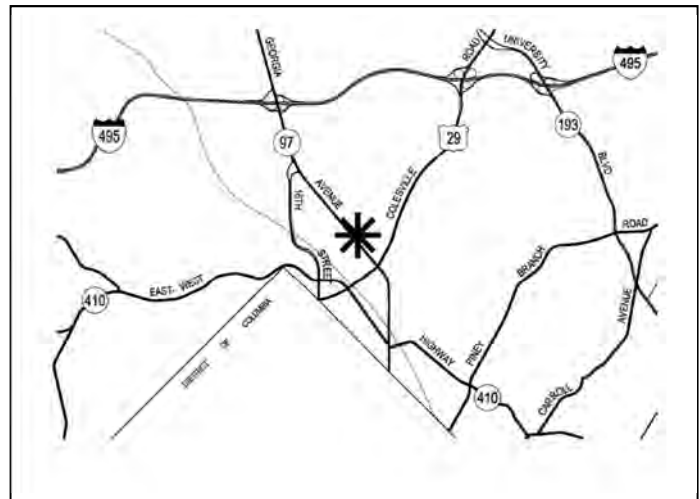
## 8787 Georgia Avenue Sketch Plan No. 320170060

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Completed: 7/14/17

### Description

- Construction of a mixed-use project of up to 413,821 total square feet, including up to 413,821 square feet of residential development, and up to 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses;
- Current use: government office;
- Located in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Spring Street and Georgia Avenue in Downtown Silver Spring;
- 3.24 acres zoned CR 3.0, C 2.0, R 2.75, H 90T in the 2000 *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan*;
- Applicant: SC/BA Silver Spring Apartments, LLC.;
- Acceptance date: February 28, 2017.



### Summary

- Staff recommends approval of the 8787 Georgia Avenue Sketch Plan with conditions.
- The project will redevelop the site with a mixed-use building including 12.5% moderately priced dwelling units, structured parking, and a new through-block connection.
- The site previously received Planning Board approval on June 5, 2014 as Mandatory Referral MR2014047, which permitted the disposition of County property and approved the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan and Tree Variance.
- On May 25, 2017, the Planning Board extended the 90-day Sketch Plan review period to July 22, 2017, pursuant to Section 59.7.3.3.C of the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board extended the Sketch Plan review period a second time, on July 13, 2017, through July 25, 2017 to accommodate a change in the Planning Board's agenda.

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## SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Location and Background

The Site is located at 8787 Georgia Avenue in the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD), within a ½ mile of the Metrorail station. The Site currently serves as the Montgomery Regional Office (MRO) for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County Planning Department. The Site is approximately 4.93 gross acres, zoned CR 3.0, C 2.0, R 2.75, H 90T, and surrounded by the Woodside Park residential neighborhood, a Sheraton Hotel, United Therapeutics, and County Parking Garage #2.

In 2006, M-NCPPC issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a public-private partnership (P3) that would construct a new Planning Department headquarters in Downtown Silver Spring. The selected development team proposed to redevelop the 8787 Georgia Avenue site, and held a community charrette in June 2008 to solicit public input on the design.

The resulting charrette concept envisioned keeping the M-NCPPC office building on the Subject Property as a new three-to-seven-story building at the corner of Spring Street and Georgia Avenue, and a new mixed-use project on the remainder of the site, between Spring Street and County Garage #2 (Figure 1). The design included significant open space and an extension of Planning Place, from the southeastern corner of the site through to Spring Street and was summarized in a report to the Planning Board on July 31, 2008 (Attachment A).



*Figure 1: 2008 Charrette Plan Concept*

The Silver Place redevelopment proposal was eventually abandoned, and the Planning Board approved no development entitlements for the project.

More recently, M-NCPPC, the County, and the Applicant entered into a new P3 to construct a new headquarters building for the Planning Department and Planning Board (along with a new multi-family building) on County Parking Lot #13 in downtown Wheaton, in conjunction with the redevelopment of the current 8787 Georgia Avenue site. The Planning Board has approved the development proposals for the Wheaton site, which commenced construction in June 2017, and has before it now 8787 Georgia Avenue.

### **Previous Approvals**

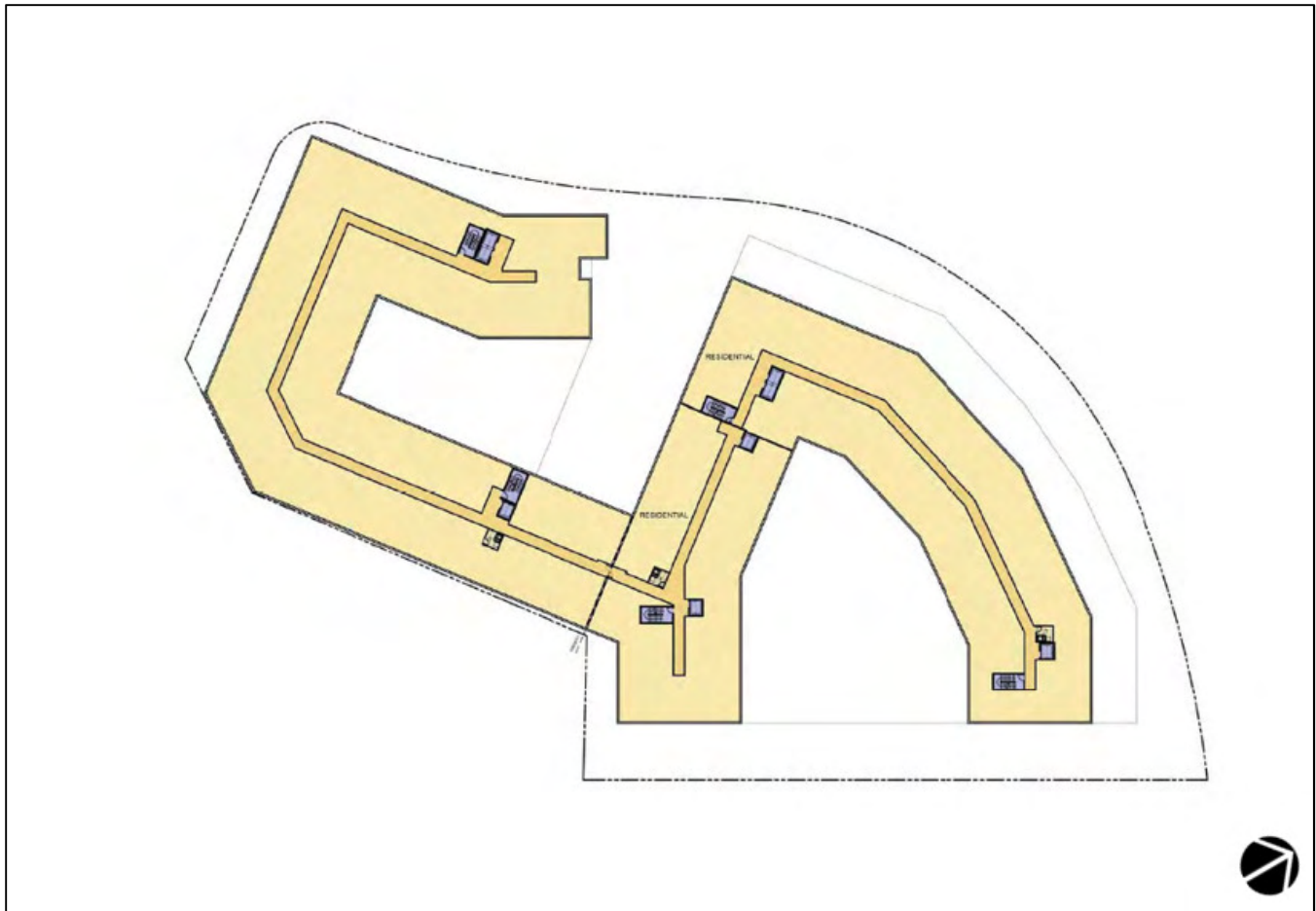
On June 5, 2014, the Planning Board approved Mandatory Referral MR2014047 for the Site, which included both the disposition of County Property (the Subject Property) and the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan and Tree Variance. At that time, the Mandatory Referral anticipated a mixed-use project with up to 360 high rise dwelling units and up to 26,200 square feet of retail.

### **Proposal**

The Sketch Plan application (Project) proposes to redevelop the Property with up to 413,821 total square feet, including up to 413,821 square feet of residential development and up to 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses with a maximum height of 90 feet. The Project includes 12.5% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) on site.



*Figure 2: Proposed Sketch Plan (P2 Level), as submitted May 19, 2017.*



*Figure 3: Proposed Sketch Plan (R2-R4 Levels), as submitted May 19, 2017.*

The site design features two buildings connected below-grade by structured parking (across the entire site) and above-grade by a proposed bridge over the proposed through-block pedestrian mews. Residential uses front onto Georgia Avenue and Spring Street, with non-residential uses limited to the Georgia Avenue frontage and immediate vicinity of the Spring Street intersection. A mews connects Planning Place to Spring Street, where it widens to form a small plaza. This mews will also include a separated bicycle facility and will serve as a significant civic gateway for pedestrians and bicyclists between the Woodside Park neighborhood and Downtown Silver Spring along the Fenton Street extended corridor.

As submitted, access to the site is provided via Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and Planning Place. As conditioned, vehicular and service access points are concentrated along Planning Place.

## **Issues**

### *Community*

Staff received numerous pieces of correspondence on this matter from residents and local homeowners and civic associations (Attachment B). The major concerns articulated in that correspondence include building height and massing and traffic and safety impacts.



### Staff

During the technical review of this Project, Staff raised numerous issues to be resolved as the design develops in preparation for Preliminary and Site Plan review. In summary, those issues included:

#### Height, Massing, and Building Design

The Project should:

- Provide a transition between the lower density residential neighborhood to the north and tall buildings to the south, specifically incorporating building articulation, comprised of both horizontal and vertical façade breaks, to reduce the building mass when viewed from the north.
- Concentrate the tallest heights along Georgia Avenue, emphasizing the prominent Spring Street corner as a gateway to the CBD.
- Line the building façade along Spring Street near Georgia Avenue with street activating uses and human scale elements.
- Provide an architectural element, such as a tower or a bay, to terminate the view from Woodland Drive, looking south into the development, near the pedestrian mews.
- Present an active façade along the park frontage with shallow front stoops, interesting building articulation, and a green corner with a secondary residential lobby at the building corner closest to the Planning Place extended intersection at Spring Street.

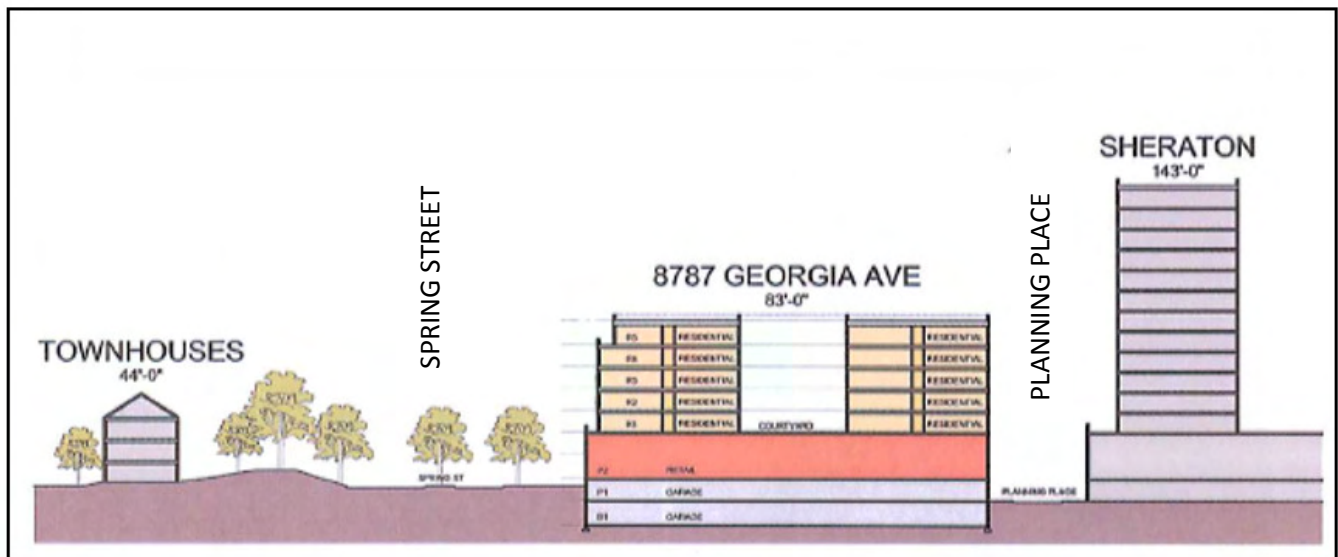


Figure 4: Building Section with Surrounding Context

#### Pedestrian Mews

The mews should be designed to:

- Create an intimate space, measuring approximately 45-feet wide, with 15 feet reserved for the separated bikeway.
- Open into a small parklet along Spring Street, providing a gathering space for surrounding neighbors and future residents.
- Be lined on both sides with two- to three- story multi-family dwelling units with activating semi-public front stoops and door yards to create an enlivened public space. Private amenity space should not be provided along the ground floor of the mews.
- Incorporate a building step-back of at least 10-feet above the two- to three-story multi-family dwelling units to ensure adequate light and air into the mews.

- Limit the visual impact of the upper-story building connection “bridge” by providing a minimum vertical clearance of 35-feet to the bottom of the bridge and limiting the cross section of the bridge to no more than approximately 40-feet (i.e. a single-loaded corridor). Alternatively, consider eliminating the bridge and provide the connection below-grade or “open air” across the mews.

#### Site Access

Access to the Site should:

- Improve roadway safety.
- Minimize potential future conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.
- Enhance the Project and contribute to surrounding uses.

#### **Status of Site Design in Response to Comments**

Staff developed an alternative design for the Site that maintains the same density as that proposed by the Applicant, but begins to address the issues raised by Staff and members of the public. Staff’s alternative design is presented in Figures 5 and 6, and the Applicant’s revised design (in response to Staff’s alternative) is presented in Figure 7. Although the Applicant’s revised plan was submitted after the final Sketch Plan submittal, dated May 19, 2017, it is included in this staff report to show progress between Planning Staff and the Applicant as the Project moves forward. Design elements enumerated in this report are recommended as conditions of approval for inclusion in subsequent building design. For the purposes of the public hearing, the drawings received on May 19, 2017 represent the submittal subject to the Planning Board’s review.

Staff’s alternative design is intended to:

- Break-up the massing along Spring Street,
- Increase light and air into the interior public spaces,
- Embrace Fairview Park, and
- Eliminate a proposed driveway on Spring Street.

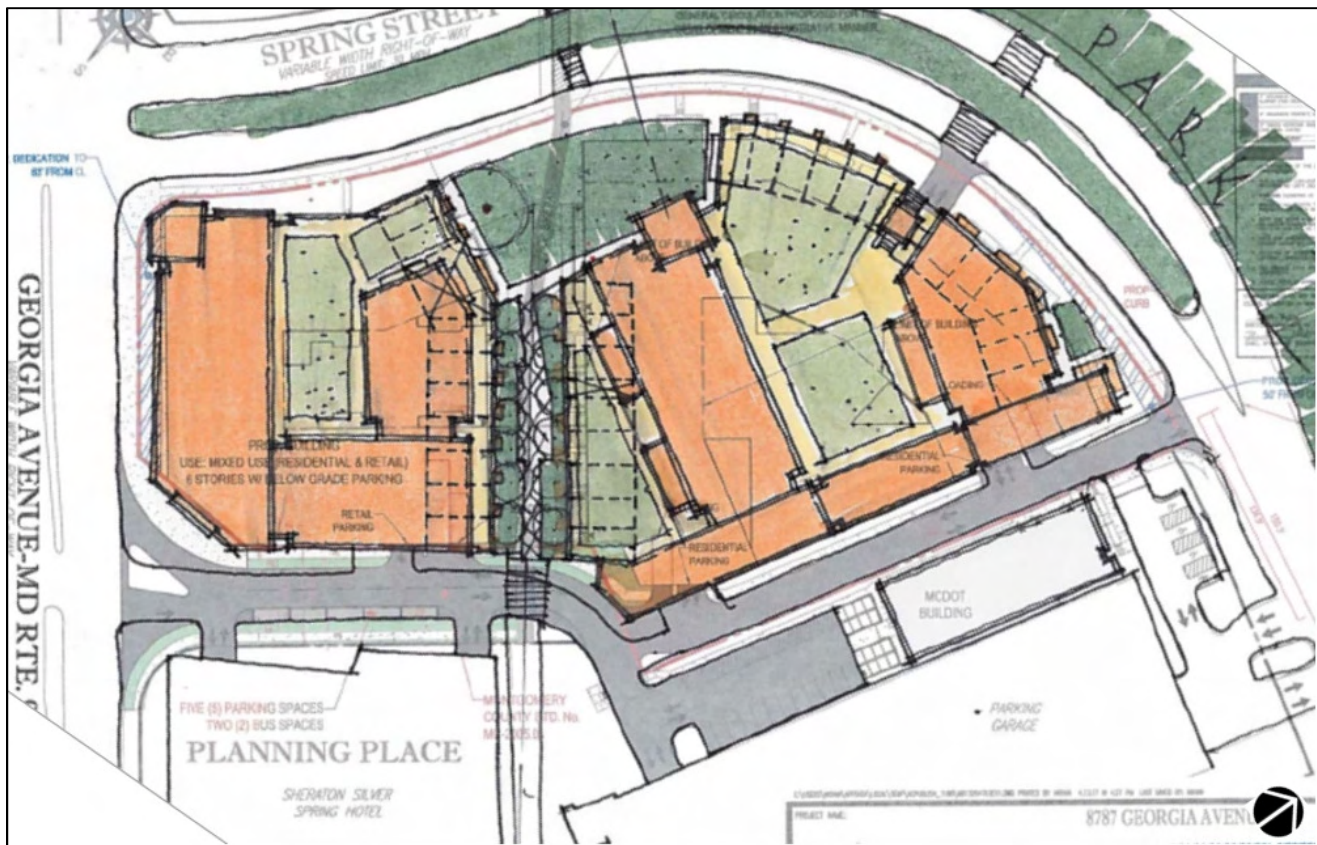


Figure 5: Staff Proposed Alternative

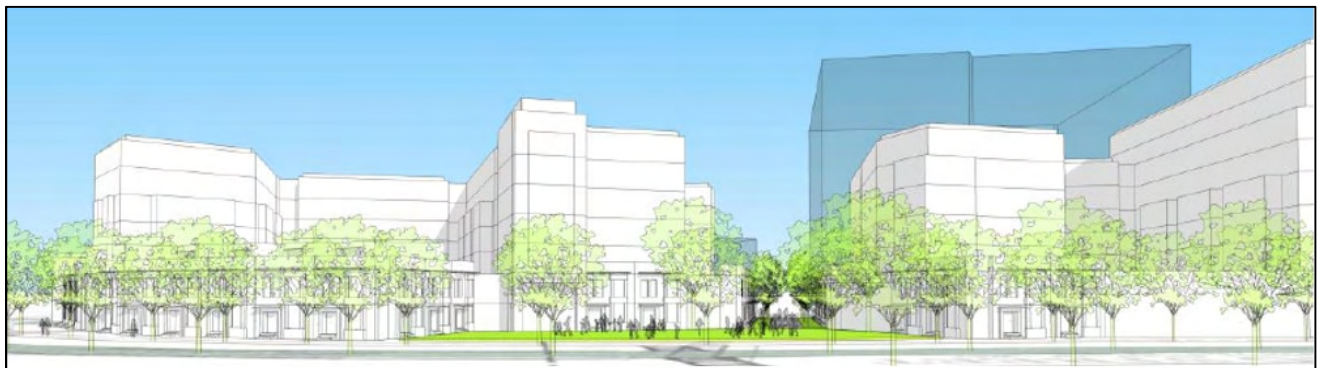


Figure 6: Staff Proposed Alternative  
(Spring Street perspective, looking south from Woodside Park)

In response to Staff's alternative design, the Applicant revised their proposal to:

- Reorient the western building toward the Sheraton hotel to the south,
- Improve the relationship between the Project and Fairview Park through building articulation,
- Consolidate internal access points on Planning Place (though the Spring Street access point remains)





*Figure 7: Applicant's Revised Site Design, submitted post May 19, 2017.*

Staff remains concerned about the proposed Spring Street access point and the Project's design as it relates to the mews and adjacent uses, however, the Project as conditioned satisfies the intent of the Sketch Plan. The site layout and building design will be further refined during the Site Plan review with careful consideration of the Project's relationship as a project on the edge of the CBD and a prominent gateway.

**Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the Subject Application with the conditions enumerated in this report.

## SECTION 2: RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

Staff recommends approval of the 8787 Georgia Avenue Sketch Plan No. 320170060, for a mixed-use building of up to 413,821 total square feet, including up to 413,821 square feet of residential development and up to 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses on 3.24 acres, zoned CR 3.0, C 2.0, R 2.75, H 90T. The following site development elements shown on the Sketch Plan stamped "Received" by the M-NCPPC on May 19, 2017, are binding under Section 59.7.3.3.F:

1. Maximum density and height;
2. Approximate location of lots and public dedications;
3. General location and extent of public open space;
4. General location of vehicular access points; and
5. Public benefit schedule.

All other elements of the Sketch Plan are illustrative and subject to refinement at the time of Site Plan.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Density

The Sketch Plan is limited to a maximum of 413,821 total square feet, including up to 413,821 square feet of residential development and up to 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses. The maximum number of dwelling units and use mix will be determined at Preliminary Plan.

2. Height

The development is limited to a maximum height of 90 feet, as measured from the building height measuring point(s) illustrated on the Certified Site Plan.

3. Incentive Density

The development must be constructed with the public benefits listed below, unless modifications are made under Section 59.7.3.3.I. and this Sketch Plan is amended. Total points must equal at least 100 and be chosen from at least four categories as required by Section 59.4.5.4.A.2. The requirements of Division 59.4.7 and the *CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines* must be fulfilled for each public benefit. Final points will be established at Site Plan approval.

- a. Major Public Facilities, achieved through expansion of the existing Bikeshare station along the Site's Georgia Avenue frontage or a financial contribution toward expansion of Bikeshare in the Central Business District. This category must be accepted by both the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the M-NCPPC.
- b. Transit Proximity, achieved through location within ½ mile of the Silver Spring Metro Station;
- c. Connectivity and Mobility, achieved by providing a through-block connection and way-finding;
- d. Quality of Building and Site Design, achieved through exceptional design, public open space, structured parking, a tower step-back, and architectural elevations; and
- e. Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment, achieved through building lot terminations.

4. Building & Site Design

The Applicant must:

- a. Establish a prominent gateway feature for the building at the Georgia Avenue and Spring Street intersection.

- b. Spring Street Façade
      - i. Reflect the confronting low density residential uses by providing a two- to three-story base of street-facing dwelling units with doors opening on to the Spring Street sidewalk;
      - ii. Step back or design building façade above the base to minimize perceived mass along Spring Street.
      - iii. Embrace Fairview Park by providing a building façade that activates and contributes to the parkland through the use of architectural elements and pedestrian connections.
    - c. Through-Block Mews
      - i. Provide a continuous pedestrian and bicycle through-block connection between Fenton Street extended and Woodland Drive;
      - ii. Provide a minimum 15-foot-wide bi-directional separated bicycle lane through the mews;
      - iii. Limit the width of the mews to approximately 45-feet wide, including the 15-foot wide separated bicycle lanes, to establish an intimate public space.
      - iv. The buildings on either side of the mews should have a two- to three-story base with activating uses (e.g., resident entries, small retail, or similar uses, as opposed to private gathering, internal amenity, or service uses); upper floors should step back a minimum of 10 feet to provide adequate light and air; and
      - v. The upper-story building connection “bridge” over the mews should be minimized and have a minimum vertical clearance of 35 feet above the mews, and a cross section no greater than approximately 40 feet (i.e., a single-loaded corridor).
- 5. Streetscape  
The Applicant must install the Silver Spring Streetscape Standard, including undergrounding of utilities, along the Site Frontage, including Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and Planning Place.
- 6. Building Lot Terminations (BLTs)  
Prior to release of any building permit, the Applicant must provide proof of purchase and/or payment for the required BLTs.
- 7. Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs)  
The Applicant must provide a minimum of 12.5% of the total units as Moderately Priced Dwelling Units on the Subject Property. The development must provide MPDUs in accordance with Chapter 25A.
- 8. Final Forest Conservation Plan
  - a. The Final Forest Conservation Plan must include the planting of two (2) 4-6” caliper Willow oaks (*Quercus phellos*) or other similarly sized native hardwood shade tree species as approved by Staff on the Subject Property, with 1,000 cubic feet of soil volume per tree for the trees to reach maximum growth at maturity. Final planting location to be determined at Site Plan.
  - b. As mitigation for the proposed loss of specimen trees 1, 2, and 3 identified on the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan (total caliper loss of 200”), the Applicant must plant eighteen (18) 3-inch caliper canopy trees onsite exclusive of plantings on the buildings.
  - c. The Applicant must show conceptual tree protection measures for trees #4 and #7.
  - d. The Final Forest Conservation Plan must include planting details for tree mitigation for the removal of the variance trees.
  - e. The Applicant must provide 0.49 acres of afforestation through offsite mitigation in a forest bank or through payment of the applicable fee-in-lieu.
- 9. Future Coordination for Preliminary and Site Plan

In addition to any other requirements for Preliminary Plans under Chapter 50 and Site Plans under Chapter 59, the following must be addressed when filing a Preliminary or Site Plan:

- a. Fire and Rescue access and facility details;
- b. Streetscape details;
- c. Demonstration of how each public benefit satisfies the Zoning Ordinance and Incentive Density Implementation Guideline requirements;
- d. Noise analysis at the time of Preliminary Plan;
- e. The Applicant must explore alternatives to a mid-block entrance into the garage from Spring Street; all vehicular access points should be from Planning Place/ Planning Place Extended.
- f. Further develop circulation and loading strategy shown on the revised Sketch Plan, dated May 19, 2017;
- g. Potential right-of-way abandonment within the area previously truncated at the intersection of Planning Place and Georgia Avenue prior to Preliminary Plan;
- h. Dedication along Georgia Avenue and Spring Street; and
- i. Draft Traffic Mitigation Agreement.



## SECTION 3: SITE DESCRIPTION

### Site Vicinity and Analysis

The subject site (Subject Property or Property) is located at 8787 Georgia Avenue in the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD). The Site is accessible via Georgia Avenue, just south of the Spring Street intersection at Planning Place, and on Spring Street, via the Garage #2 driveway. The Site is comprised of Lot 2, Block C, and Parcel D in the “Woodside Park” Subdivision, as recorded in the Montgomery County Land Records in Plat Nos. 11049 and 21574, respectively. The Site has a gross tract area of approximately 214,921 square feet (4.93 acres) and a lot area of approximately 141,112 square feet (3.24 acres). The Property is zoned CR 3.0, C 2.0, R 2.75, H 90T.

The Property lies on the northern edge of the *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (Sector Plan) and shares the block with the Sheraton Hotel, United Therapeutics, the Cameron residential building, and Silver Spring Parking Lot District Garage #2. This entire block is zoned CR with maximum FAR between 3.0 and 5.0. Fairview Road Urban Park (zoned R-60) and an office building (zoned EOF 3.0) directly confront the subject property across Spring Street. The predominantly single-unit community, Woodside Park, is directly across Spring Street. The Property is located within one ½ mile of the Silver Spring Metrorail Station and falls within the Silver Spring Parking Lot District (PLD).



Figure 8: Site Aerial



The Property is improved with a three-story government office building that serves as the Montgomery County Regional Office (MRO) of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The Property contains no forest, streams, wetlands, or environmental buffers. There are no known rare, threatened, or endangered species on-site; there are no 100-year floodplains, stream buffers, or wetlands on-site. There are no historic properties on-site.

Spring Street separates the CBD from Woodside Park, to the north, and begins the transition from the residential community to the more intensive downtown development. Along the site frontage, Spring Street is a median-divided arterial roadway within a 100-foot wide public right-of-way. The roadway is improved with one travel lane in each direction, westbound turn lanes at Georgia Avenue, a limited amount of on-street parking, and a tree-lined median. The segment of Spring Street west of Woodland Drive is buffered from the roadway by a densely-vegetated berm (Figure 9) that separates the townhouse community and the roadway. The townhomes in this area are oriented to face into the Woodside Park community, resulting in rear yards facing south toward the berm and ultimately, the Subject Property.



*Figure 9: Spring Street (looking northeast)*

## SECTION 4: BACKGROUND

### *Silver Place*

In 2006, M-NCPPC issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a public-private partnership (P3) that would construct a new Planning Department headquarters at one of a number of sites in Downtown Silver Spring. The selected development team proposed to redevelop the 8787 Georgia Avenue site, and held a community charrette in June 2008 to solicit public input on the design.

The resulting charrette concept envisioned keeping the M-NCPPC office building on the Subject Property as a new three-to-seven-story building at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street, and a new mixed-use project on the remainder of the site, between Spring Street and County Garage #2, as shown conceptually below. The design included significant open space and an extension of Planning Place, from the southeastern corner of the site through to Spring Street.



*Figure 10: 2008 Charrette Plan Concept*

The Silver Place redevelopment proposal was eventually abandoned, and the Planning Board approved no development entitlements for the project.

More recently, M-NCPPC, the County, and the Applicant entered into a new P3 to construct a new headquarters building for the Planning Department and Board (along with a new multi-family building) on County Parking Lot



13 in downtown Wheaton, in conjunction with the redevelopment of the current 8787 Georgia Avenue site. The Planning Board has approved the development proposals for the Wheaton site, which commenced construction in June 2017, and has before it now 8787 Georgia Avenue.

*PLD Parking Meter Maintenance Facility*

On June 2, 2016, the Planning Board denied Mandatory Referral MR2016006 for the construction of a new Silver Spring Parking Lot District Service (PLD) parking meter maintenance facility in the narrow strip of land between the Subject Property and County Garage #2. However, MCDOT is moving forward with the Service Facility. Although not part of the Subject Application, the PLD facility directly impacts redevelopment of the 8787 Georgia Avenue site because it complicates vehicular access and places both operational and aesthetic constraints along Planning Place extended.

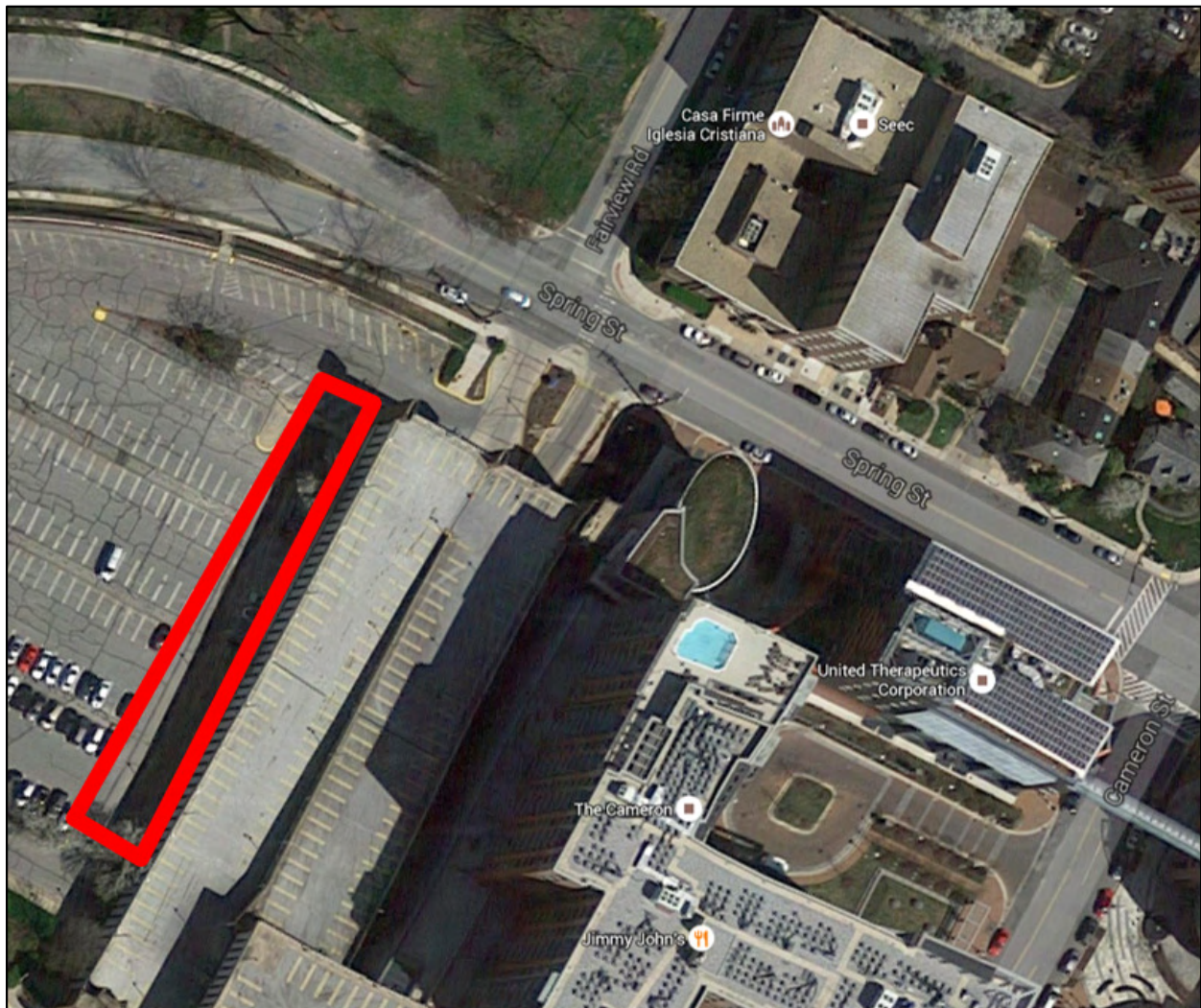


Figure 11: Detail Adjacent Site Aerial – PLD Maintenance Facility location





Figure 12: 2016 Mandatory Referral PLD Service Facility Rendering

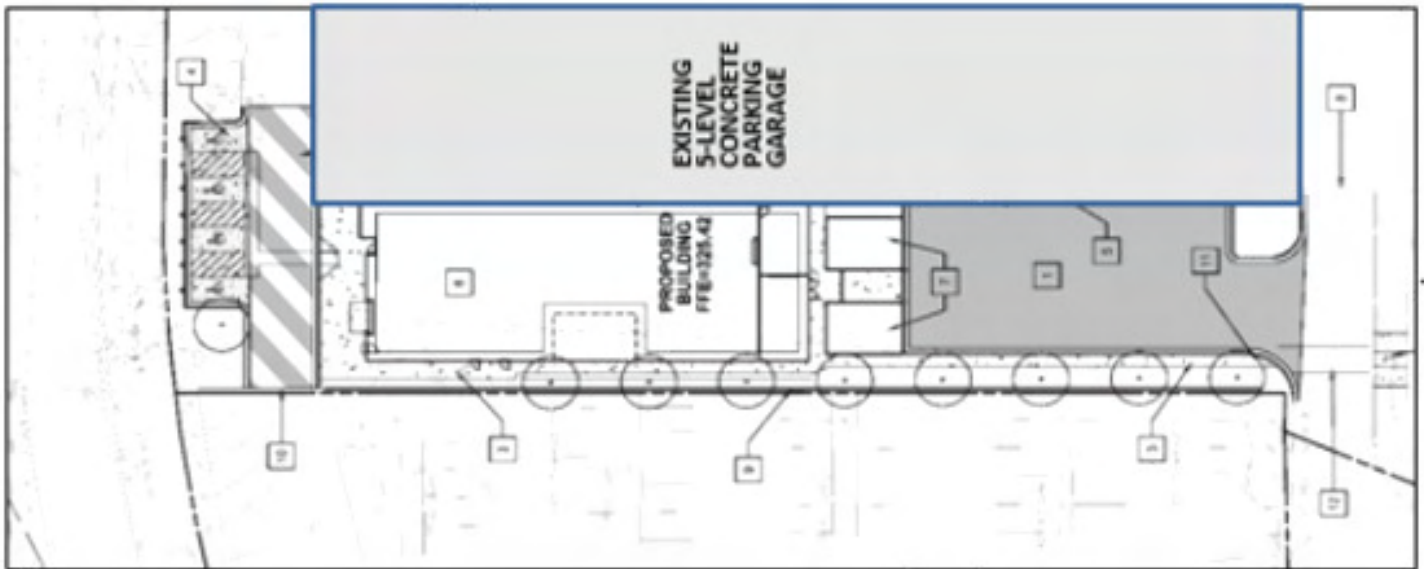


Figure 13: Proposed Site Plan– PLD Maintenance Facility

## SECTION 5: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Previous Approvals

On June 5, 2014, the Planning Board approved Mandatory Referral MR2014047 for the site, which included both the disposition of County Property and the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan and Tree Variance. At that time, the Mandatory Referral anticipated a mixed-use project with up to 360 high rise dwelling units and up to 26,200 square feet of retail<sup>1</sup>. The conceptual design, based on the proposal that won the RFP, consisted of two buildings separated by a mews extending the pedestrian way from the end of Fenton Street extended along the County parking garage from Planning Place to a small plaza at Spring Street. The building at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street featured ground-floor retail with residential units above. East of the mews, the design shows an above-grade structured parking garage with multi-family liner units along the mews and Spring Street, forming a podium for the apartment wings above it as well as amenity space for residents.

This design created a low podium to create a modestly scaled edge along Spring Street, minimizing the overall perceived height of the building by creating two book-end towers on either side with open space in the middle. As discussed in the Mandatory Referral staff report, the proposal met five of the six themes of the 2000 *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* vision. Further, the staff recommended and the Planning Board accepted that the design achieved many of the urban design goals in the Sector Plan (pg. 73) such as to “create an attractive pedestrian environment by creating a system of short blocks, and defining streets with buildings, open spaces, and streetscaping at a human scale created by street-front retail, frequent doors and windows, architectural detail, and appropriately scaled buildings.”

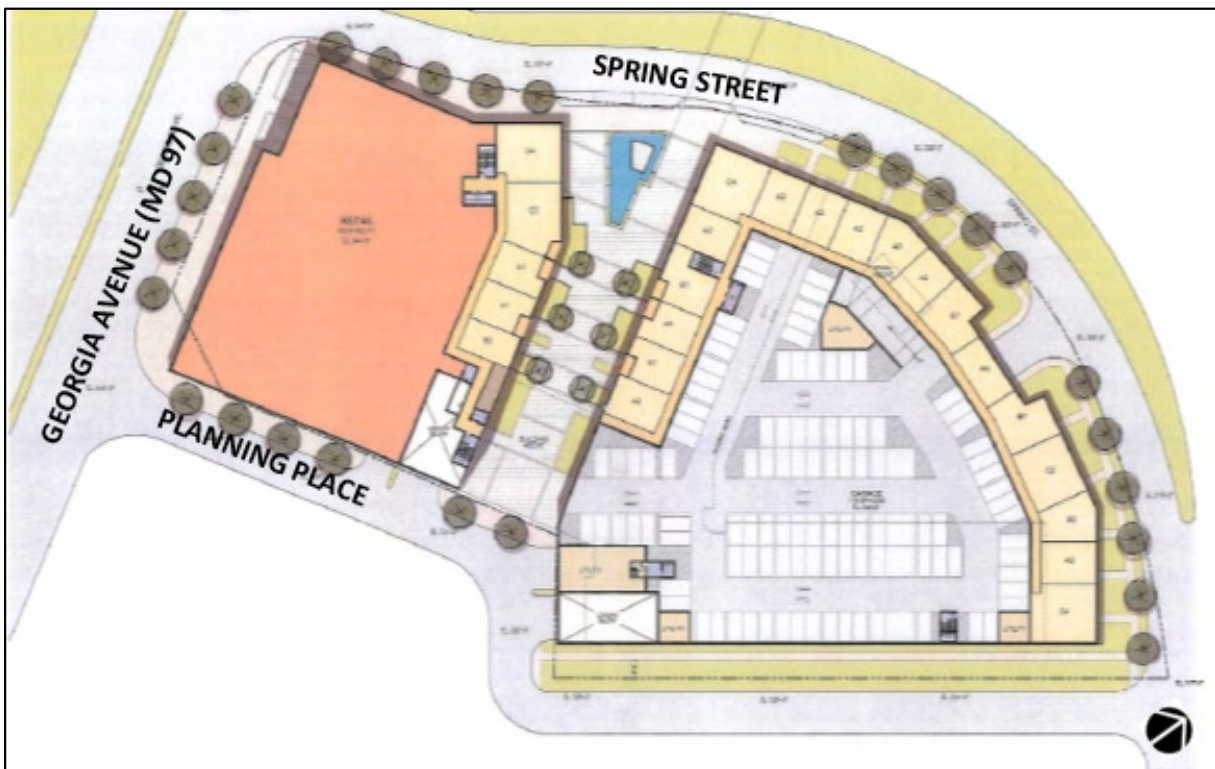


Figure 14: 2014 Mandatory Referral Concept, Podium Level

<sup>1</sup> Project density at the time of the 2014 Mandatory Referral was illustrative and non-binding.





*Figure 15: 2014 Mandatory Referral Concept, First Level*



*Figure 16: 2014 Mandatory Referral, Conceptual Views*

## Proposal

### Uses and Density

The Sketch Plan application (Project) proposes to redevelop the Property with up to 413,821 total square feet, including up to 413,821 square feet of residential development and up to 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses with a maximum height of 90 feet. The Project includes 12.5% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) on site. The final distribution of uses will be determined as part of the subsequent Preliminary Plan and Site Plan reviews.

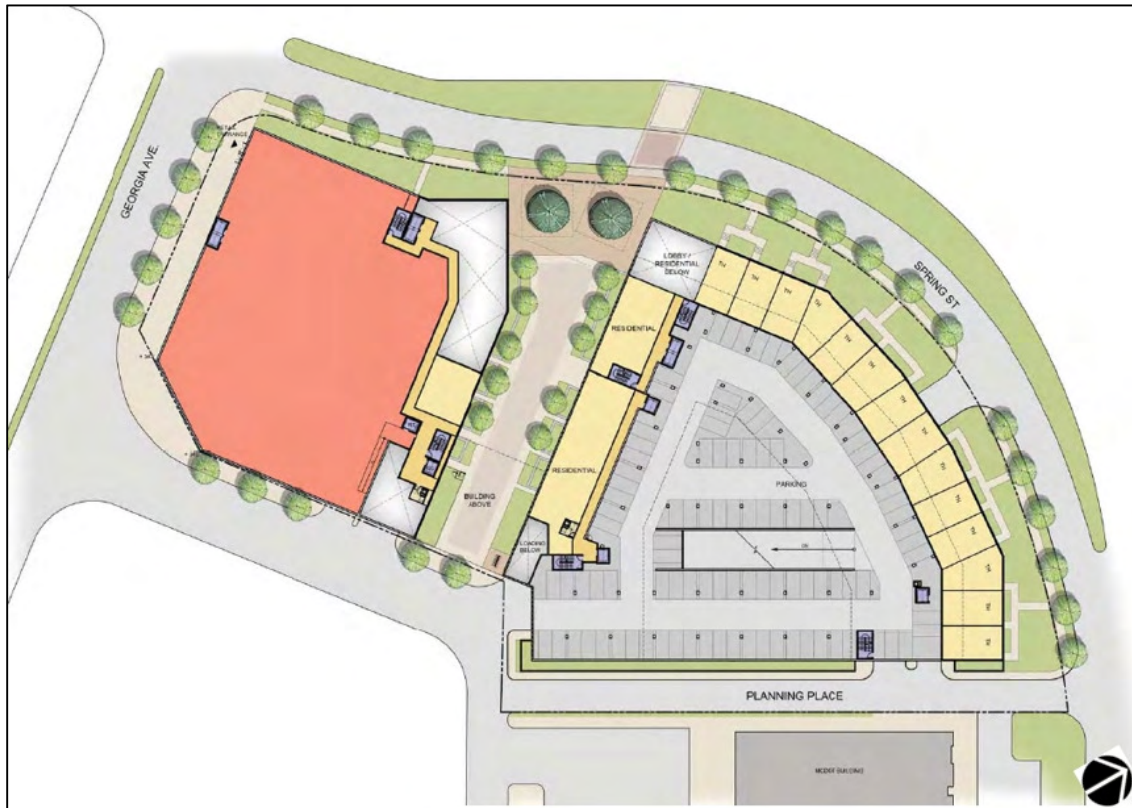
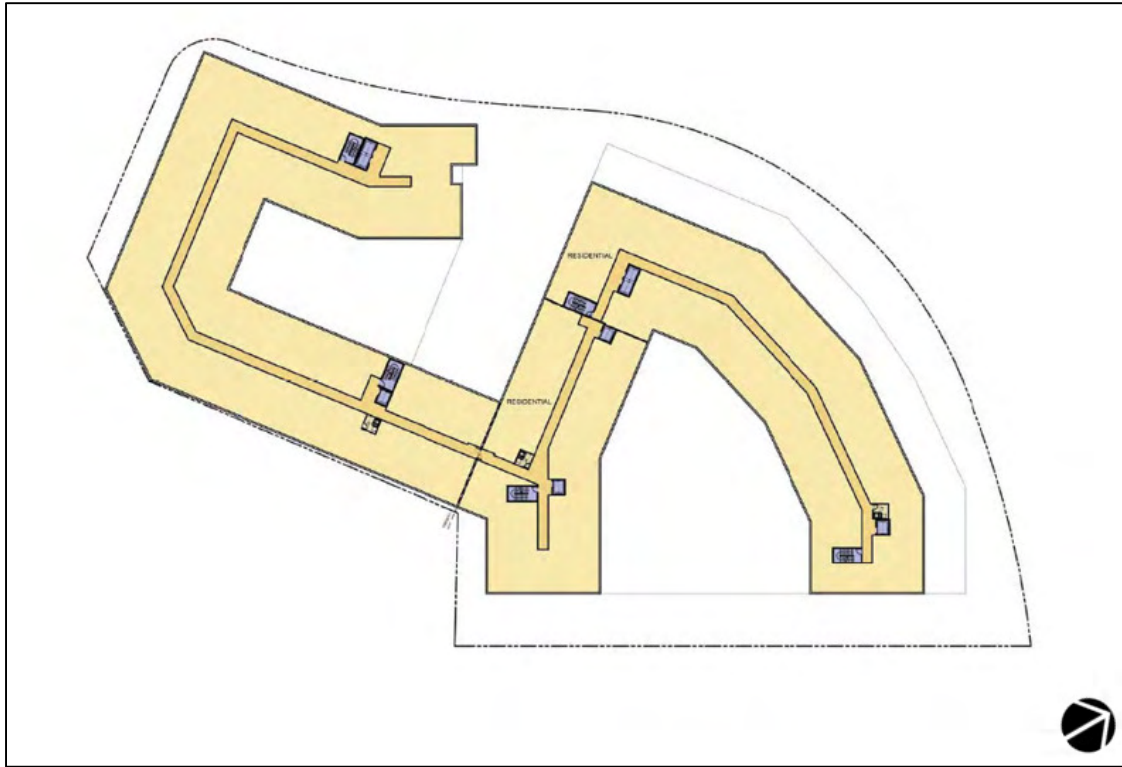


Figure 17: Proposed Sketch Plan (P2 Level), as submitted May 19, 2017.





*Figure 18: Proposed Sketch Plan (R2-R4 Levels), as submitted May 19, 2017.*

### Buildings

As submitted, the Sketch Plan design carries-forward some of the elements from the Mandatory Referral. The structured parking garage continues to underlie the entire building footprint, including the mews. The two experienced building masses are separated at ground level by a mews (Figure 19), though they are joined across the space at the upper floors. Retail remains limited to Georgia Avenue. The orientation of the upper floors east of the mews, however, has flipped, increasing the perceived mass of the building along Spring Street.



*Figure 19: Conceptual Perspective looking south into the mews from Spring Street*



*Figure 20: Conceptual Perspective along Spring Street, looking southeast.*



As discussed in Section 7, Staff has been working with the Applicant to address concerns about the design from Staff, reviewing agencies, and the community.

### Open Spaces

The Project's primary public open space is the mews connecting Planning Place to Spring Street, where it widens to form a small plaza. This mews will also include a bicycle facility and will serve as a significant civic gateway for pedestrians and bicyclists between the Woodside Park neighborhood and Downtown Silver Spring.

In the Sketch Plan submission, the Applicant is proposing to take credit for the open space area that would generally be recognized as the front yards of the units that open directly onto Spring Street. Staff has advised the Applicant that this is not acceptable and they are working to revise the design to provide the required amount of public use space.

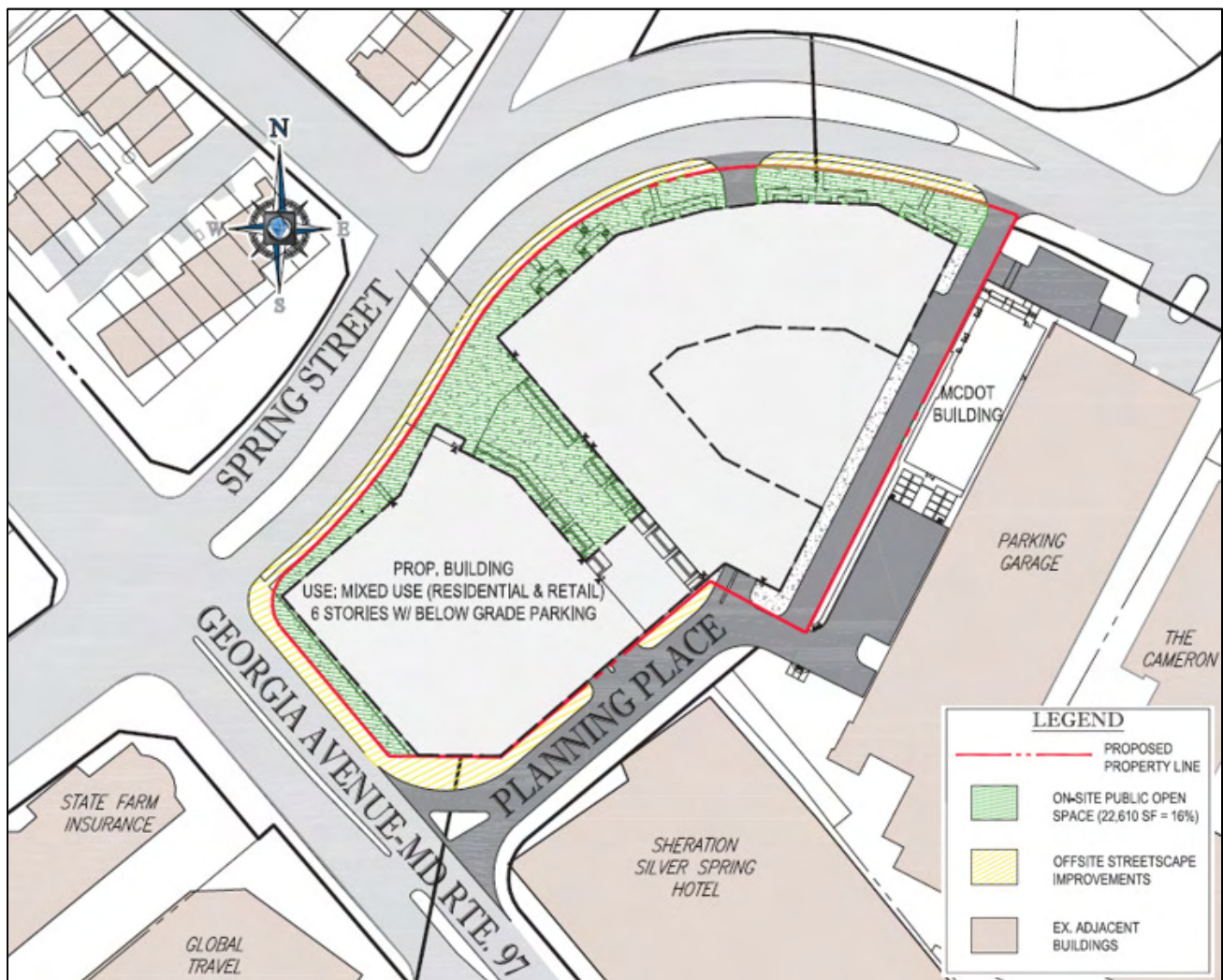


Figure 21: Open Space Exhibit

## Environment

### *Forest Conservation*

At the Sketch Plan stage this Application is not subject to the Chapter 22A, Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law, however, the Forest Conservation Law will be applicable to the project at the time of Preliminary Plan submission. The Planning Board previously approved a Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan (PFCP) and Tree Variance on June 5, 2014, in conjunction with Mandatory Referral MR2014047. (Attachment C)

### *Noise*

The project proposes residential units to be built within the CBD adjacent to a six-lane divided highway. A noise analysis must be submitted for review at time of Preliminary Plan submission.

### *Stormwater Management*

A Stormwater Management Concept Plan is not required at the time of Sketch Plan. Submission of the concept to the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) and approval will be required at the time of Preliminary Plan.

## Transportation

### *Access and Circulation*

Pedestrian access to the Property is proposed directly from the existing sidewalks along Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and the south side of Planning Place. Both Spring Street and Georgia Avenue are improved with center medians adjacent to the Property, which provide some pedestrian refuge from vehicular traffic.

Bicyclists access the Property via Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and Planning Place. Bicycle access will be improved on Spring Street upon completion of the Summer 2017 MCDOT separated bicycle lanes project, discussed below. The Subject Project will incorporate the new separated bicycle lanes into subsequent designs.

The mews will improve pedestrian and bicycle access between the CBD and points north (Figure 22). In addition to the separated bicycle lanes proposed through the site, the Project proposes a private extension of Planning Place to connect the existing terminus with Spring Street. This street extension will help consolidate access points for the Project and improve internal circulation.





Figure 22: Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Vehicular access to the Property is proposed via Spring Street and Georgia Avenue with Planning Place providing internal circulation. The Spring Street entrance is proposed on the eastern side of the Site adjacent to the Garage #2 entrance. The Georgia Avenue entrance is located on the western side of the Property, at the existing intersection of Planning Place and Georgia Avenue. The Georgia Avenue access point permits a right-in/right-out maneuver from the northbound travel lanes and a left-in turn from the southbound lanes, however, southbound traffic cannot exit the Property via Georgia Avenue. Staff will work with the Applicant during subsequent preliminary and site plan stages to refine the site access concept, which should include elimination of the proposed Spring Street garage access point and reconfiguration of the Planning Place extended intersection with Spring Street.



Figure 23: Vehicle Circulation

#### *Transit Connectivity*

The immediate area is well served by transit that includes the Red Line Silver Spring Metrorail Station (located approximately 1,850 feet to the southwest of the Site), Metrobus, RideOn, the VanGo Circulator and future Purple Line. Specific transit routes near the Site include:

1. RideOn Bus Routes 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22,
2. WMATA Metrobus Routes J5, Q1, Q2, Q4, Y2, Y7, Y8, Z2, Z6, Z7, Z8, Z11

#### *Master Plan Roadways and Pedestrian/Bikeway Facilities*

The 2000 *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan*, the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*, and the 2005 *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan* recommend the following master plan facilities along property frontage:

1. Spring Street, along the north and east site frontages, as an Arterial with a minimum right-of-way width of 100' (50' from center line).
2. Georgia Avenue, along the west site frontage, as a Major Highway with a minimum right-of-way width of 126' (63' from centerline).
3. Planning Place, along the south site frontage, as a Business District street, with a minimum right-of-way width of 60'.
4. Fenton Street extended, as a publicly accessible dual bikeway from Cameron Street to Woodland Drive.

#### *Silver Spring Separated Bicycle Network*

The County Council has endorsed and funded a network of new separated bicycle infrastructure within the Silver Spring Central Business District. That network identifies Fenton Street extended (including the pedestrian mews proposed as part of the Project) and Spring Street as bikeways that should be improved in the future with separated bicycle lanes (Figure 24). In response to the Council's endorsement of this plan, Staff directed the



Applicant to improve the mews with separated bike lanes and coordinate with the County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to accommodate the Spring Street bicycle lanes along the project frontage. Specific details regarding the mews and accommodation of the Spring Street design will be determined as part of subsequent Preliminary and Site Plan reviews.

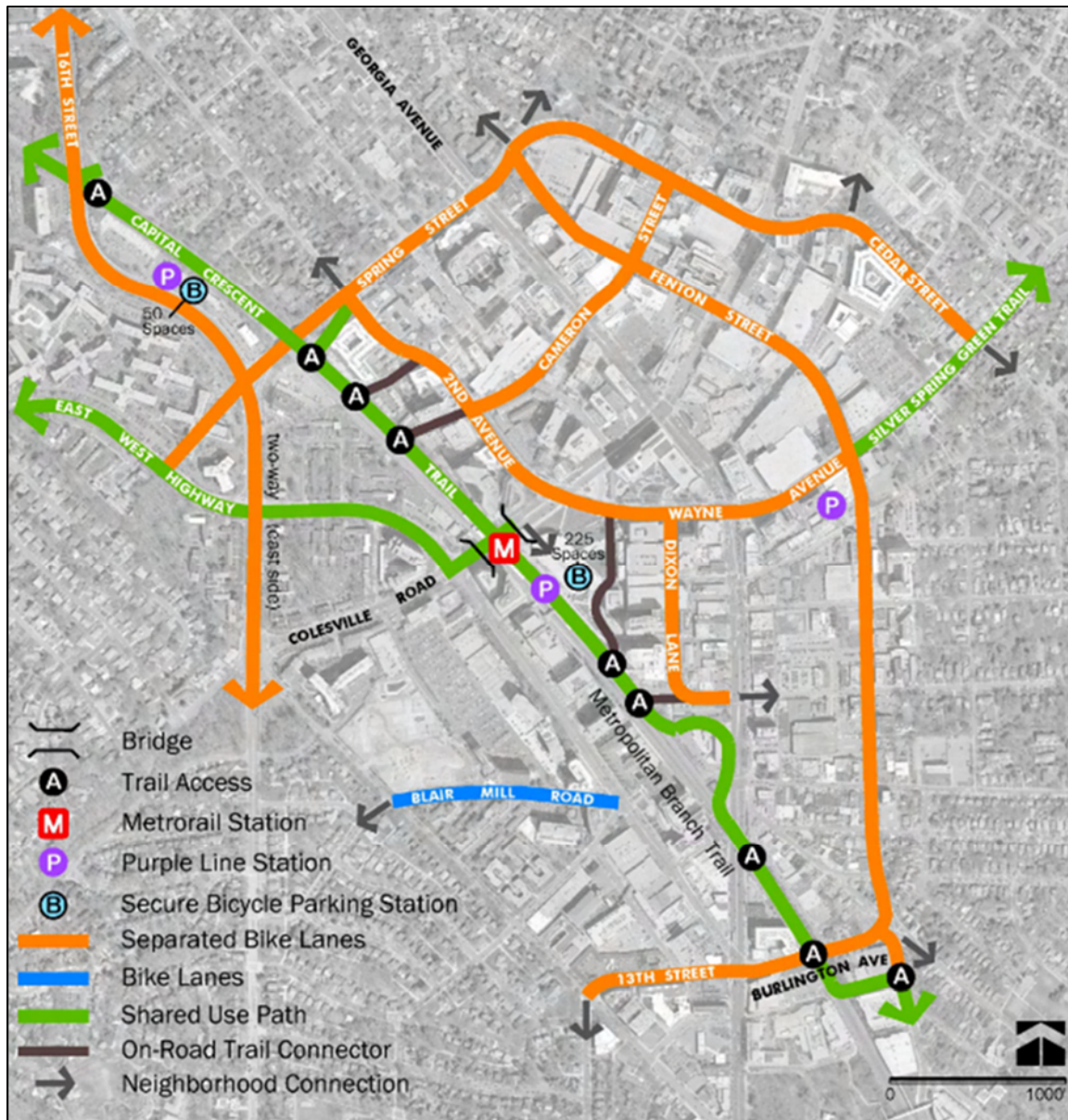


Figure 24: Silver Spring Separated Bicycle Network

#### Sector-Planned Transportation Demand Management

As a mixed-use project within the Silver Spring Transportation Management District (TMD), the development is required to enter into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement (TMAG) with the Planning Board and MCDOT to participate in the Silver Spring TMD. The specific criterion requiring a TMAG is 25 or more employees or more than 100 dwelling units. Specific details of the agreement will be determined at Preliminary Plan.

### *Adequate Public Facilities*

Adequate Public Facilities (APF) review will be conducted at the time of Preliminary Plan. Although the Application does not require a formal APF transportation review at Sketch Plan, Staff is including the following illustrative summary of transportation impacts (Table 1), provided by the Applicant<sup>1</sup> and modified by Planning Staff to reflect maximum densities requested in the Application. As a potential development with 250 mid-rise apartments, 150 condominiums units, and 50,000 square feet of retail uses<sup>2</sup>, the Project is estimated to generate 388 total peak hour person trips in the morning and 812 total peak hour person trips in the evening. After accounting for peak hour trips currently associated with the existing 35,600 square feet of office use on the Site, 110 morning peak hour trips and 155 evening peak hour trips, the Project is estimated to generate 278 net new morning peak hour trips and 657 net new evening peak hour trips. As a result of the estimated transportation impact, the Project must submit a Transportation Impact Study with the Preliminary Plan to satisfy the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR).

Table 1: 8787 Georgia Avenue Person Trip Generation

Land Use		Morning Peak Hour	Evening Peak Hour
<b>Existing</b>	<b>(Credit)</b>		
	35,600 SF Office	(110)	(155)
<b>Proposed</b>			
	250 Mid-rise Apartments	138	168
	150 Condominium	110	129
	50,000 SF Retail	140	515
	Subtotal Proposed	388	812
	<b>Net New Peak Hour Person-Trips</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>657</b>

Source: M-NCPPC Staff.

### *Travel Mode Adequacy Test*

The 2016 *Subdivision Staging Policy* considers all transportation modes, including: vehicular (auto-driver), transit, walking and biking. Mode-specific adequacy tests are required for any transportation mode estimated to have 50 or more net new peak hour trips associated with the new development. Total person trips for the Project are summarized by travel mode in Table 2. The Project's estimated transportation impact necessitates that the Transportation Impact Study evaluate all four travel mode adequacy tests.

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<sup>1</sup> The Applicant is seeking flexibility prior to determination of the Project's final use mix at Preliminary Plan. The development program will not exceed 413,821 total square feet, including up to 413,821 square feet of residential development, and up to 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses. The use mix summarized in this staff report is for illustrative purposes only.

<sup>2</sup> Section 59.7.3.3.B.3.h.iv. states that the Sketch Plan application must state the estimated range of peak-hour trips. The number of residential dwelling units included in this staff report is illustrative and intended to demonstrate a conservative transportation analysis (i.e. more impactful than the development program anticipated as part of the subsequent Preliminary Plan review). Although the residential density exceeds the 360 dwelling units anticipated in the 2014 Mandatory Referral (MR2014047), the Mandatory Referral was specifically for the disposition of County land and the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan and did not establish the development program on the Subject Property.

Table 2: 8787 Georgia Avenue Trip Estimate by Mode

	Total Person-Trips	Auto-Driver	Transit	Pedestrian	Bicycle
<b>Morning Peak Hour</b>	278	129	34	95	61
<b>Evening Peak Hour</b>	657	290	107	260	153

- Auto-Driver adequacy will be evaluated by measuring intersection delay at one tier of intersections around the Property.
- Transit system adequacy will be evaluated by inventorying bus routes associated with stations and stops located within 1,000 feet of the Property. Mitigation may be required to address conditions worse than a level of service (LOS) D caused by increased transit demand generated by the Project.
- Pedestrian system adequacy will be evaluated within 500 feet of the Property. Mitigation may be required to address conditions worse than a crosswalk level of service (LOS) D, or pedestrian delay exceeding 40-seconds, caused by increased pedestrian demand generated by the Project.
- Bicycle system adequacy will be evaluated by analyzing bikeways within 750 feet of the Property. Mitigation may be required to achieve a Level of Traffic Stress 2 (LTS-2) or lower. Alternatively, the Applicant may implement (or fund) a master-planned improvement that provides an equivalent improvement in the Level of Traffic Stress.

## SECTION 6: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ISSUES

### Applicant Outreach

The Applicant held a pre-submittal public meeting on February 1, 2017, at the Silver Spring Civic Building, and has complied with all submittal and noticing requirements. The Applicant advises Staff they have also held the following meetings with the surrounding communities:

- Woodside Station Home Owners Association and Woodside Park Civic Association leadership – 1/25/2017
- Woodside Park Civic Association – 2/1/2017
- Sheraton – 2/10/2017
- Woodside Park Board – 5/10/2017
- Woodside Park Civic Association – 5/10/2017
- Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce – 6/15/2017
- Woodside Park Civic Association – 7/10/17

### Correspondence

Staff received numerous pieces of correspondence on this project from residents and local homeowner/ civic associations (Attachment B). The major concerns articulated in that correspondence are discussed below.

- The Project is inconsistent with the design resulting from the 2008 “Silver Place” charrette:  
The Subject Property has been the focus of a redevelopment proposal for many years, resulting in a previous iteration of the conceptual design, “Silver Place.” Although the Planning Board granted no entitlements for that development, the concept was the culmination of a multi-day design charrette that examined many of the Site’s opportunities and considered public input. Many residents have expressed concern that the Subject Application differs from the Silver Place concept, particularly with regard to the Site’s relationship to the lower-density residential neighborhood to the north.
- Building height at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street:



Residents who contacted Staff expressed concern about the proposed height of the Project at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street. Many stated that the Project should consist of a lower scale to match the height and massing of the residential neighborhood to the north.

- Building massing should be oriented toward the CBD (i.e. “south” side of the Subject Property): Those residents who were willing to support building heights above approximately three stories at this corner suggested that height should be oriented toward the southern portion of the site (i.e. toward the Sheraton hotel) to minimize the Project’s visual impact on the neighborhood.
- Potential impacts to Fairview Park resulting from conceptual realignment of Fairview Road: Residents expressed opposition to MCDOT’s suggested realignment of Fairview Road through Fairview Park due to potential parkland impacts. MCDOT’s suggestion was intended to correct an intersection spacing issue, between Fairview Road and Planning Place extended, however, Planning Staff does not endorse the realignment and has directed the Applicant to pursue other means of correcting the issue.
- Traffic safety associated with new site access point on Spring Street: Residents expressed concern about existing vehicular speed on Spring Street and fear that a new access point on Spring Street may further complicate circulation on public streets adjacent to the Site.
- Project density and use mix: Residents expressed concern about the number of new dwellings, the amount of parking provided, and the impacts of retail uses on the Site. Residents generally cited the number of new apartments in downtown Silver Spring and a concern about being overwhelmed and concern about noise, lighting, and spillover activity from new retail customers. In addition to these concerns, some residents fear that the Site is not appropriate for retail and may result in a vacant storefront due to market demand at this location.

In response to comments received from the public, Staff developed an alternative site design and held two meetings with the Applicant to discuss possible adjustments to the conceptual building architecture, massing, and site access. This alternative design is discussed in detail, in Section 7, below. In response to the concerns about retail and the use mix on this Site, the Applicant is continuing to evaluate the market demand for a non-residential use. As conditioned, the Project is responsive to many of the public comments.

## **SECTION 7: OUTSTANDING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED DURING SUBSEQUENT REVIEW**

The Subject Property is located on the edge of the CBD near the Woodside Park single family neighborhood. This location presents an opportunity to improve the relationship between the CBD and lower density residential through the careful use of building height, massing, and façade articulation of the proposed buildings. Since the May 19, 2017 submittal, Staff and the Applicant collaborated to refine elements of the site design.



*Figure 25: Illustrative Elevation along Spring Street (looking west), as submitted May 19, 2017.*

Staff developed an alternative design for the Site that maintains the same density as that proposed by the Applicant, but began to address the issue raised above. Staff held a number of design meetings with the Applicant team on June 7<sup>th</sup> and June 14<sup>th</sup> 2017 to discuss potential changes for consideration at the time of Site Plan review. A summary of those designs (Figures 26 and 27), as well as the Applicant's revised plan (Figure 28) is discussed below. Although the Applicant's revised plan was submitted after the final Sketch Plan submittal, dated May 19, 2017, it is included in this staff report to show progress between Planning Staff and the Applicant as the Project moves forward. Design elements enumerated in this report are recommended as conditions of approval for inclusion in subsequent building design.

Staff's alternative design is intended to break-up the massing along Spring Street, increase light and air into the interior public spaces, embrace Fairview Park, and eliminate a proposed driveway on Spring Street. The idea of breaking up building massing is a 3-Dimensional proposition that should include vertical building breaks as well as horizontal step-backs and projections. Staff's design also eliminates the upper story breezeway over the pedestrian mews, which creates a heavy and somewhat oppressive perception in an otherwise open and inviting public open space. Although the Applicant's revised design includes two- to three-story multi-family dwelling units with street activating features to enliven the public realm, the singular horizontal step-back is insufficient to articulate what appears to be a monolithic building. Staff's proposed alternative design embraces Fairview Park by creating an opening and staircase from the upper courtyard and lines Spring Street with human scale two- to three-story multi-family dwelling units.

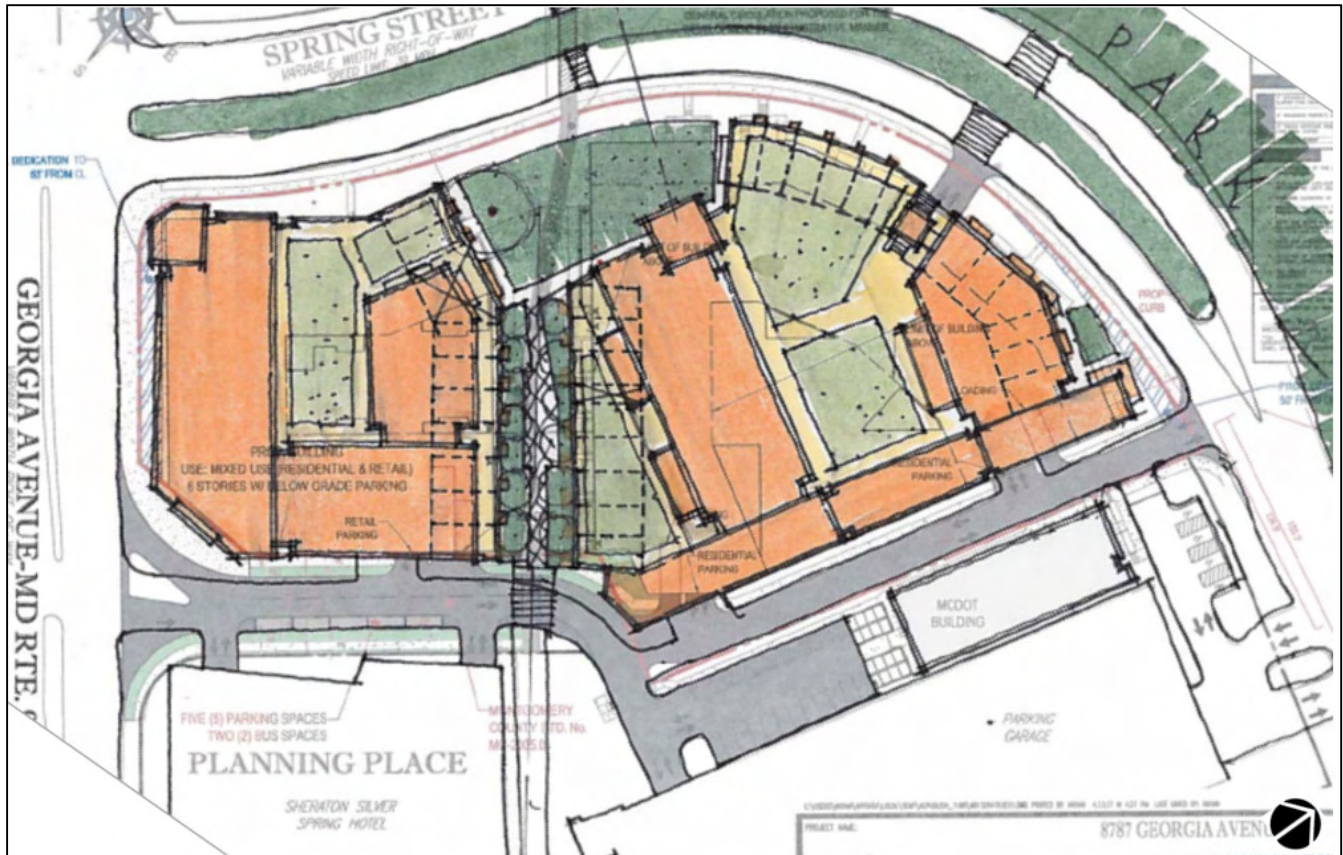


Figure 26: Staff Proposed Alternative

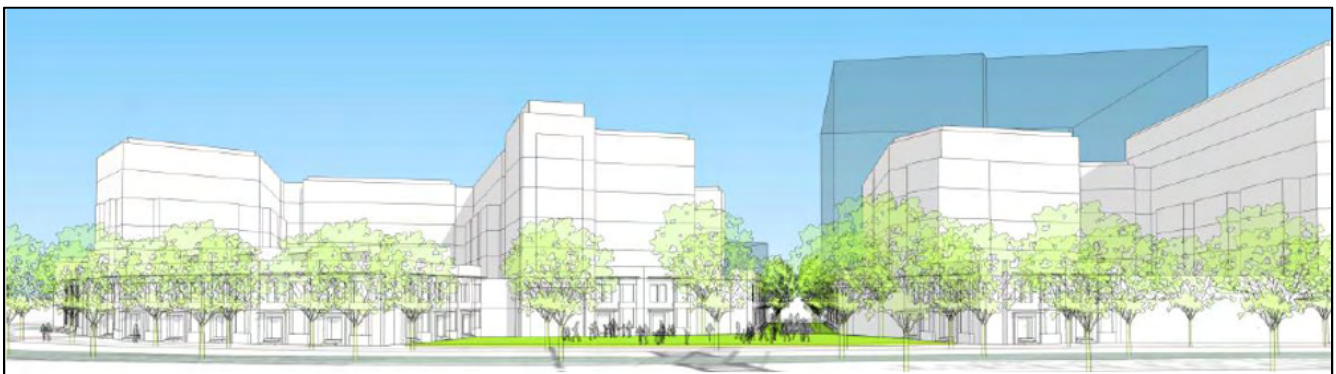


Figure 27: Staff Proposed Alternative  
(Spring Street perspective)

In response to Staff's alternative design, the Applicant revised their proposal in a manner than incorporated some, but not all, of Staff's alternatives. The most significant change to the site design following Staff's alternative was reorientation of the western building toward the Sheraton hotel to the south. This change pushes the mass of the Project toward the CBD and presents the narrow ends of the building wings to the Woodside Park neighborhood. With this horizontal relief between the wings, the overall mass of the larger building is broken down and fragmented when viewed from across Spring Street. This orientation also allows the short end of the residential building wing to face onto Georgia as a singular monumental gateway element. The design will be further refined during the Site Plan review with careful consideration of the Project's relationship as a project on the edge of the CBD and a prominent gateway.





*Figure 28: Applicant's Revised Site Design, submitted after May 19, 2017.*

#### *Potential Right-of-Way Abandonment*

The northeast corner of the Planning Place/ Georgia Avenue intersection right-of-way was truncated as part of a previous subdivision for the Subject Property in accordance with the requirements set forth in Chapter 50, the Subdivision Regulations. Staff recommends that the Applicant consider petitioning the County Council<sup>1</sup> for abandonment of the truncated portion, prior to submittal of the Preliminary Plan, to improve the building design and enhance the pedestrian experience at this intersection. Although MCDOT and MD SHA must issue recommendations on the subject as part of subsequent reviews, It is M-NCPPC Staff's preference that the channelized right-turn be eliminated from this intersection to improve pedestrian safety.

## **SECTION 8: PROJECT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

The purpose of a Sketch Plan is to identify general land uses, development intensity, and public benefits for the optional method of development in the CR, CRT, EOF or LSC Zones. The Sketch Plan is intended to be conceptual in nature with an emphasis on building densities, massing, heights and anticipated uses, the locations of open and public use spaces, the general circulation patterns for all modes of transportation, an estimated range of peak hour trips and relationships between existing or proposed adjacent buildings and rights-of-way. Details of the proposed development are determined during Preliminary and Site Plan review. Section 59.7.3.3.E of the Zoning Ordinance states: "To approve 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:"

<sup>1</sup> Abandonment of public right-of-way must take the form of an application to County Council in accordance with Chapter 49 the County Code.



1. *meet the objectives, general requirements, and standards of this Chapter;*

The Sketch Plan meets the development standards of Section 59.4.5.4, as shown in the Data Table below:

Table 3: Data Table

<b>Project Data Table for the CR3.0 C2.0 R2.75 H90T Zone</b>		
<b>Development Standard Section 59 – 4.5.4</b>	<b>Permitted/Required</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Gross Tract Area	n/a	214,921 sf or 4.93 AC
Net Lot Area		141,112 sf or 3.24 AC
<b>Maximum Density (CR)</b>	<b>644,763 sf (3.0 FAR)</b>	<b>Up to 413,821 sf (1.93 FAR)</b>
<i>Non-residential (C)</i>	429,842 sf (2.0 FAR)	Up to 50,000 sf (0.23 FAR)
<i>Residential (R)</i>	591,032 sf (2.75 FAR)	Up to 413,821 sf (1.93 FAR)
Building Height (feet) <sup>1</sup>	90	Up to 90
Minimum Public Open Space (3 Frontages)	10% of Lot Area	15% (21,168 sf)

The Sketch Plan conforms to the intent of the CR zone as described below.

- a) *Implement the recommendations of applicable master plans.*

#### Site-Specific Recommendations

The Subject Property is within the portion of the Silver Spring CBD described as “Other Areas of the CBD” and is adjacent to the Georgia Avenue Corridor/ Gateway (Sector Plan, page 72).

Although the Sector Plan did not anticipate redevelopment of the entire M-NCPPC office building site, Map 28 of the Sector Plan showed potential housing on the Site and identified the mid-block connections included as part of the Subject Application. The Sketch Plan, as conditioned, provides a mixed-use, mid-rise residential development with ground-floor retail or other non-residential uses consistent with the Sector Plan recommendations. The Project provides up to 413,821 square feet of residential uses (with final unit count and unit mix to be determined at Site Plan) with 12.5% on-site MPDUs and up to 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses.

As conditioned, the Project will improve upon the existing street frontages of Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and Planning Place, providing an enhanced pedestrian environment. Loading and vehicular access points are proposed primarily from Planning Place, though the Application also seeks approval of a new access point on Spring Street. Although Staff generally supports the access concept for access points along Georgia Avenue and Planning Place, both Planning Staff and MCDOT have reservations about the potential Spring Street access point. Staff does not support an access point on Spring Street at this time with further analysis required at the time of Preliminary Plan.

<sup>1</sup> Section 59-4.5.2.C.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, for CR zoned properties designated with a “T”, residential density may be increased above the number following the R on the zoning map in proportion to any MPDU density bonus achieved under Chapter 25A of the County Code for providing more than 12.5% of the residential units as MPDUs, and total density may be increased above the number following the zoning classification on the zoning map by an amount equal to the residential bonus density achieved. No additional MPDUs are proposed as part of the Subject Application, therefore no incentive density is awarded.

Although the Sector Plan calls to retain the CBD-1 Zone, the Property was rezoned through the Zoning Ordinance rewrite to CR 3.0, C 2.0, R 2.75, H 90T, effective October 31, 2014. The intent of the CBD-1 zoning was to encourage redevelopment within the CBD by allowing more commercial density in response to the current market (in 2000), but also provide the flexibility for both commercial or residential high-rises, or mixed use projects. The Project will be a mixed-use, mid-rise residential development with ground-floor non-residential uses under the optional method of development, which satisfies the intent of the CBD-1 Zone and the current CR Zone.

#### Urban Design Recommendations

The Sector Plan provides general urban design recommendations for redevelopment projects in the Silver Spring CBD. The guidelines most applicable to the application site are listed below with analysis immediately following.

- *Create an attractive pedestrian environment by creating a system of short blocks, and defining streets with buildings, open spaces, and streetscaping at a human scale created by street-front retail, frequent doors and windows, architectural detail, and appropriately scaled buildings.*

As submitted, in the Sketch Plan dated May 19, 2017, the building presents an imposing mass along Spring Street and lacks articulation and activation along the mews. As conditioned, the development will create an attractive pedestrian environment defined by well-designed buildings providing pedestrian residential, retail, and service entrances, open space connections, and other visual interest. A central landscaped mews will be accessible from the three surrounding streets and will provide a portion of the Silver Spring Separated Bicycle Network. The building height will be stepped-back along Spring Street to provide a transition from the single-family residential neighborhood to the north and the taller commercial and mixed-use buildings in the core.

- *Through urban design treatments, establish streetscapes that emphasize the hierarchy of the circulation system.*

As submitted, in the Sketch Plan dated May 19, 2017, the Project circulation concept creates the potential for conflict points at the intersection of Planning Place extended and a new mid-block access point on Spring Street. As conditioned, the development will provide safe and efficient site access and circulation as Staff recommends all vehicular access points should be from Planning Place. Although streetscape specifications will be finalized at the site plan stage, the Project will include appropriate streetscape elements, including the undergrounding of overhead utility lines.

- *Create formal and informal civic spaces – buildings and open spaces – that add to property values, provide amenity, and improve downtown's aesthetic appearance.*

As submitted, in the Sketch Plan dated May 19, 2017, the Project lacks a relationship with Fairview Park and does not effectively provide formal and informal gathering spaces due to the mass of the building façade opposite the park. As conditioned, the Project should embrace Fairview Park by providing a building that activates and contributes to the parkland through the use of architectural elements and pedestrian connections. The Project will provide a high quality public open space, in the form of the through-block mews and small parklet along Spring Street, that will upgrade the indoor and outdoor areas of the Project that will facilitate a connection to

the broader community. The Project's public use spaces will enhance the community, enliven the area, and connect to other downtown area uses.

#### General Recommendations

For the general goals of the Plan, the Sector Plan's vision for Silver Spring's future is "to create a development environment that invites revitalization" (page 28). The Plan outlines six themes: transit-oriented downtown, commercial downtown, residential downtown, green downtown, civic downtown and pedestrian friendly downtown that guide the vision for the Silver Spring CBD, which apply to the Project.

#### *Transit-Oriented Downtown*

The site is situated at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street: the northern gateway to the CBD. The Sector Plan's transit-oriented downtown theme strives to balance the needs of commuter and local traffic, of walkers and drivers and to maximize the investment in Silver Spring's transit infrastructure. "Creating a transit-oriented community is not only a transportation effort, but also a land use effort" (Sector Plan, page 16). The Plan further states that transportation choices go beyond the car to link local and regional buses, trains, bikes and foot travel. The Property is one ½ mile of the Silver Spring Metro Station and is served well by transit that includes Metro, Metrobus, RideOn, the VanGo Circulator and future Purple Line. As conditioned, the development will create an attractive pedestrian environment defined by well-designed buildings providing pedestrian residential, retail, and service entrances, open space connections, and other visual interest. A central landscaped mews will be accessible from the three surrounding streets and will provide a portion of the Silver Spring Separated Bicycle Network.

#### *Commercial Downtown*

The Sector plan states "Commercial activity-a mutually supportive mix of office, stores, and other business enterprises-is the defining feature of a successful downtown" (Sector Plan, page 18). The potential for a non-residential component (retail and/or restaurant) on the ground floor at the Georgia Avenue/ Spring Street intersection may provide commercial services for the residents and surrounding neighborhood.

#### *Residential Downtown*

The Sector Plan's residential downtown theme seeks to create a mix of housing choices supported by parks, shopping, cultural, civic and employment uses with transit. "A green and pedestrian friendly downtown will create parks, plazas, and streets of a desirable residential community" (Sector Plan, page 19). The Project will provide up to 413,821 square feet of residential uses (with final unit count and unit mix to be determined at Site Plan) with 12.5% on-site MPDUs and up to 50,000 square feet of non-residential uses.

#### *Green Downtown*

The green downtown theme of the Plan envisions shaded, tree-lined streets and well placed green parks and plazas, creating a comprehensive system of open spaces that provide economic, environmental and aesthetic benefits throughout downtown. The Plan states "Landscaped plazas are incorporated into building and site design to create visual and physical respite, to create formal and informal gathering places, and to complement street and building design" (Sector Plan, page 23). The streetscape along Georgia Avenue and Spring Street will be upgraded as necessary with street trees, paving, and lighting to improve the pedestrian experience and to interact with their neighbors. The Project is intended to transition the CBD to the residential neighborhoods to the north by lining the base of the project with two- to three-story multi-family dwelling units; function



as a gateway into the CBD by providing a focal point at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street; and provide a public open space in the form of a mid-block pedestrian/ bicycle connection, the “mews.” The public use space will be strategically located along Spring Street, accessible to residents and open to the public. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant to provide a pedestrian-friendly and inviting space. The public use space (mews) and along the streetscape will enhance the experience of residents and the public when walking along the streets or enjoying the mews. As conditioned, the project will embrace Fairview Park by lining Spring Street with human scale two- to three-story multi-family dwelling units.

#### *Civic Downtown*

The civic downtown theme envisions formal or informal, large or small, public or private civic spaces, where people meet, cross paths and gather (Sector Plan, page 21). As conditioned, the Project will provide a high quality public open space, in the form of the through-block mews and small parklet along Spring Street, providing a unique, public informal civic space.

#### *Pedestrian-Friendly Downtown*

The pedestrian-friendly downtown theme of the Plan encourages the development of active streets and sidewalks, busy with people walking to shop, commute, or for pleasure. The Plan states “An urban area’s greatest economic asset and strongest physical definition comes from its pedestrian environment” (Sector Plan, page 24). The pedestrian-friendly elements in the Plan include:

- Sidewalks sized to accommodate walking traffic with landscaping, edged by buildings, and connecting urban parks, plazas and activities.
- Street crossings promoting safety and access for pedestrians.
- Street definition formed with harmonious proportions of buildings edging the street and sidewalk and the activities created.
- Street patterns to create easy pedestrian connections.
- Urban plazas to provide breaks in the street patterns to attract groups of people.
- Street furniture to add architectural and streetscape details that contribute visual interest and texture.
- On street parking to buffer pedestrians from moving traffic.
- The scale of buildings and streets in relations to people to create a comfortable urban environment.

Furthermore, in the pedestrian-friendly downtown theme, the Plan states “The design of the pedestrian-scaled environment combines buildings and streets, active sidewalks, and open spaces detailed with street furniture and landscaping to provide a safe, pleasant and interesting environment” (Sector Plan, page 14). The pedestrian-friendly downtown theme recommends creating urban plazas to attract groups of people.

The theme encourages sidewalks and streets scaled to walkers and street crossings should promote safety and access for pedestrians. Proposed improvements to the streetscape and through-block mews will improve the pedestrian experience by creating a safe and attractive pedestrian space.

As conditioned, the Application is consistent with the six themes.

#### Circulation Systems Recommendations

The Sector Plan recommends creating a system of trails and bike routes, implementing streetscape to create a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment to assess, and where appropriate, reuse public parking facilities, and to make circulation improvements to local roads. (Page 93)

As submitted, the Project proposes a new mid-block Spring Street access point that may create a conflict point along Spring Street. Staff does not support vehicular access points along Spring Street and instead recommends that all vehicular access points occur via Planning Place. As conditioned, the Project includes a central pedestrian mews through the Property as a projection of Fenton Street, which will include separated bicycle lanes that will improve pedestrian and bicycle access between the CBD and lower density neighborhoods to the north. In addition to the separated bicycle lanes, the Project proposes a private extension of Planning Place to connect the existing terminus with Spring Street. This street extension will help consolidate access points for the Project and improve internal circulation. The Project will provide streetscape improvements along Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and Planning Place, which will create an inviting pedestrian environment that will activate the street and support the ground-floor retail included as part of the Project. As conditioned, the Application conforms to the Sector Plan recommendations for Circulation Systems.

#### Housing Recommendations

The housing objective of the Sector Plan is to develop new residential projects to provide housing and encourage maintenance of existing housing, creating Silver Spring as an even more desirable residential market. The recommendations include:

- provide housing choice and market-feasible development options, including apartments and townhouses;
- rezone CBD properties to encourage residential development; and
- convert selected public sector surface parking lots to housing.

The Plan identified the Subject Property as a potential housing site. The Application provides a new mixed-use project with up to 413,821 square feet of residential uses (with final unit count and unit mix to be determined at Site Plan) with 12.5% on-site MPDUs, offering housing opportunities proximate to the numerous transit options of downtown Silver Spring. The Application meets the Sector Plan housing objective.

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

The Property is currently comprised of an existing government office building and associated surface parking lot. The Project will redevelop the parking lot and existing single-use building on the site with a higher-density mixed-use development with structured parking to maximize residential development within a half mile from the Silver Spring Metro and the future Purple Line. The Project includes ground-floor non-residential uses, upper level residential units, public open space and residential amenity space. The Project meets the objective of this finding.

- c) *Encourage development that integrates a combination of housing types, mobility options, commercial services, and public facilities and amenities, where parking is prohibited between the building and the street.*

The Project encourages such development by proposing market-rate residential units in a variety of unit types as well as 12.5% MPDUs on-site, offering housing opportunities for a range of incomes

proximate to the numerous transit options of downtown Silver Spring. The potential for a non-residential component (retail and/or restaurant) on the ground floor at the Georgia Avenue/ Spring Street intersection may provide commercial services for the residents and surrounding neighborhood, though the Applicant is continuing to evaluate the market demand for non-residential uses on the Subject Property. The Project will satisfy the intent of the Commercial/ Residential Zone with or without a non-residential component due to its role as a transition between the Central Business District and residential neighborhood. The Project facilitates all modes of transportation – pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular, and transit. It will provide wide sidewalks along Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and Planning Place. The Project does not propose any parking between the building and the street frontages.

- d) *Allows a flexible mix of uses, densities, and building heights appropriate to various settings to ensure compatible relationships with adjoining neighborhoods.*

The Project may provide a mix of uses on-site, including a significant amount of new residential development and, potentially, ground floor retail with a building height of up to 90 feet, as allowed in the CR 3.0, C 2.0, R 2.75, H 90T zone. The specific use mix and project density will be determined at the time of Site Plan review. Adjacent building heights and uses in the CBD, south of the Property, include the Sheraton Hotel with a height of approximately 15-stories. Directly north of the site, across Spring Street, are existing three story single family attached dwelling units.

As currently submitted, the Project lacks step-backs, vertical breaks, and other architectural elements intended to break-down the building massing. As conditioned, the Project is anticipated to enhance the pedestrian experience and soften the height of the building by incorporating low two- to three-story volumes along the Spring Street frontage and provide a step-back above the base to lessen the building's mass across from the residential neighborhood. This design element will create a pedestrian scale and better relate to the surrounding uses.

As conditioned, the Project's building heights are appropriate at this location and ensure compatible relationships with adjoining neighborhoods, and therefore meets the finding.

As an existing condition, the vegetated berm along the north side of Spring Street is the first transitional element between the neighborhood and Subject Property. This transition is further aided by an exceptionally wide public right-of-way (100-feet in width), tree-lined median, and proposed setback from the Subject Property lot line.

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

As conditioned, the Project will help to meet the need for additional housing options in the Central Business District. The mixed-use development will provide more residents to patronize local businesses. Additionally, providing more housing stock in the CBD provides greater opportunities for employment, a fundamental ingredient for the "smart growth" promoted by the previous CBD zones. The Project provides a variety of housing options through provision of both market-rate units and MPDUs on site in an array of unit sizes. In addition, the Project provides non-residential uses such as retail and/or restaurant.

- 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.

2. *substantially conform with the recommendations of the applicable master plan;*  
As discussed earlier in the findings, and as conditioned, the Project provides the diversity of housing, connectivity improvements, and will create an open space that will contribute to master planned pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. The issues that are identified in the conditions of approval must be addressed prior to the Site Plan application. In addition, the Applicant will design the Spring Street façade with articulation in building massing, step-backs, and heights. The Project conforms to the intent and recommendations of the Sector Plan.
3. *satisfy any development plan or schematic development plan in effect on October 29, 2014;*  
The Sketch Plan is not subject to a development plan or schematic development plan.
4. *achieve compatible internal and external relationships between existing and pending nearby development;*  
As submitted, the Project lacks elements that contribute to compatible internal and external relationships. Specifically, the Project appears imposing when viewed from the north side of Spring Street and lacks the scale and proportionality necessary along the mews to create an intimate space. As conditioned, the building is compatible in height and scale with nearby existing development. The Project will provide a building measuring up to 90 feet in height with massing concentrated along Georgia Avenue and internally toward the south side of the Site to minimize the building's perceived mass when viewed from across Spring Street. The Project will provide adequate open space and setbacks to relate to the surrounding uses and character. Although further refinement of the site layout and building design is necessary at Site Plan, the Project is anticipated to provide an appropriate transition to adjoining neighborhoods as recommended with the urban design goals and guidelines in the Sector Plan. The Project, as conditioned, achieves compatible internal and external relationships between existing and pending nearby development. Staff will work with the Applicant as part of the Site Plan review to ensure a site design that is compatible with surrounding land uses.
5. *provides satisfactory general vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist access, circulation, parking, and loading;*  
As submitted, the Project adds a new mid-block access point on Spring Street that Staff does not support, however, conditions recommended in this staff report are expected to result in satisfactory circulation, parking and loading. The Project proposes an extension of Planning Place to Spring Street that must be coordinated with MCDOT to reconfigure access between the Subject Property and PLD Garage #2. As conditioned, the Project provides satisfactory general vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist access, circulation, parking, and loading. The Project appropriately locates activating pedestrian uses along the Georgia Avenue and north-south mews frontages, including the residential entrances, the public open space, and Silver Spring standard streetscaping. Planning Place on the south side of the Property appropriately functions for vehicular access and loading.
6. *propose an outline of public benefits that supports the requested incentive density and is appropriate for the specific community;*

The Application includes public benefits that address the general incentive and density considerations required by Section 59.4.7.1.B. The public benefits:

- a. Take into consideration "the recommendations of the applicable master plan" by providing the diversity of housing, providing opportunities to retain existing businesses and expanding opportunities for new businesses, and connectivity improvements;
- b. Meet "the CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines" by providing the proper calculations and criteria for each public benefit;

- c. Meet “any design guidelines adopted for the applicable master plan area” by providing streetscape improvements along Georgia Avenue, Spring Street, and Planning Place, which will create an inviting pedestrian environment that will activate the street and support the ground-floor retail included as part of the Project;
- d. Are appropriate for “the size and configuration of the site” by improving the existing configuration of aging existing buildings and providing structured parking;
- e. Adequately address “the relationship of the site to adjacent properties” by designing the building at an appropriate scale for the surroundings with heights that complements the existing character of the area;
- f. Consider “the presence or lack of similar public benefits nearby” through the provision of affordable housing, environmental benefits, pedestrian connections, all of which are currently needed in this area; and
- g. Provide “enhancements beyond the elements listed in an individual public benefit that increase public access to, or enjoyment of, the benefit” which will be developed and assessed during Preliminary and Site Plan reviews.

For the proposed development, the zoning code requires 100 points in four categories. Although at the time of sketch plan review only the categories need be approved, Table 4 shows both the categories and points for the public benefits recommended at sketch plan to demonstrate the project’s ability to meet the requirement to provide sufficient benefit points.

Table 4: Public Benefits

<b>Public Benefits Calculations</b>			
<b>Public Benefit</b>	<b>Incentive Density Points</b>		
	<b>Max Allowed</b>	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
<b>59.4.7.3A: Major Public Facilities</b>			
<b>Bikeshare</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>4.25</b>
<b>59.4.7.3B: Transit Proximity</b>			
<b>¼ to ½ Mile from Transit</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>59.4.7.3C: Connectivity and Mobility</b>			
<b>Through-Block Connection</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Way-Finding</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>59.4.7.3E: Quality of Building and Site Design</b>			
<b>Public Open Space</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Exceptional Design</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Structured Parking</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Tower Step-Back</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Architectural Elevations<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>59.4.7.3F: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment</b>			
<b>BLTs</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.6</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>113.85</b>

<sup>1</sup> This subcategory was added after the final submittal, dated May 19, 2017, based on further building design coordination between the Applicant and Planning staff.

### Major Public Facilities

*Bikeshare:* The Applicant requests 4.25 points for expanding the existing bikeshare station at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street, along the Site frontage, or contributing to bikeshare within the immediate vicinity. Further coordination with MCDOT is necessary to determine the means through which public benefits points will be achieved, however, expansion of bikeshare in the Central Business District is appropriate. Staff supports this category at Sketch Plan, however, the Applicant's contribution must meet criteria set forth in the *2015 Commercial/Residential Zones Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines* (CR Guidelines) and be accepted by both MCDOT and M-NCPPC at the time of Site Plan.

### Transit Proximity

The Property is located within one ½ mile of the Silver Spring Metro Station, which allows the development to be eligible for Level 1 transit as defined in the Zoning Ordinance. Staff supports 30 points as suggested in the CR Guidelines.

### Connectivity and Mobility

*Through-Block Connection:* The Applicant requests 20 points for providing a through-block pedestrian connection of at least 15-feet in width along the alignment of Fenton Street extended, between Planning Place and Spring Street. This facility is a master planned pedestrian/ bicycle connection and constitutes a portion of the Council endorsed Silver Spring Separated Bicycle Network. Final determination of this category will be made at Site Plan upon review of the final design and Staff supports granting 20 points at this time.

*Way-Finding:* The Applicant requests 5 points for providing wayfinding signs within the Site's public spaces and through the mews. Such wayfinding is envisioned to help orient pedestrians and bicyclists toward transit facilities, trails, paths, parks, other public amenities. Further details will be determined at the time of Site Plan, including coordination with MCDOT's wayfinding for the Silver Spring Separated Bicycle Network. Staff supports granting 5 points in this public benefit category at this time with further details and refinement to be provided at the time of Site Plan.

### Quality of Building and Site Design

*Exceptional Design:* The Applicant requests 10 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; 10 points are awarded for projects that meet all criteria. The Sketch Plan is intended to be conceptual in nature with an emphasis on building densities, massing, and heights. Staff supports the Applicant's request at this time with further details and refinement to be provided at the time of Site Plan.

*Public Open Space:* The Applicant requests 5 points for providing 15% of the net lot area as public Open Space. A final public open space plan will be required at the time of Site Plan and final determination of points will be based on the amount and quality of open space provided at that time. Staff supports this request at this time.

*Structured Parking:* The Applicant requests 13 points for providing on-site parking within a parking structure. The Applicant has provided precedent images demonstrating how exposed façades of the garage will be treated to improve the aesthetic appearance of the building. Details on the façade treatment will be determined at the time of Site Plan. Staff supports the Applicant's request at this time with further details and refinement to be provided at the time of Site Plan.

*Tower Step-Back:* The Applicant requests 10 points for providing a tower step-back above the two- to three-story multi-family dwelling units along Spring Street as a means of breaking-up the building façade as it is

viewed from Spring Street. As discussed in this report, Staff is working with the Applicant to refine the design and will make the final determination on this category at the time of Site Plan. Staff supports the Applicant's request at this time with further details and refinement to be provided at the time of Site Plan.

*Architectural Elevations:* The Applicant requests 15 points for providing a design that is bound by architectural elevations as part of a certified site plan showing elements of the façade. This subcategory was added to the application after the final May 19, 2017 submittal based on coordination with Planning Staff. This subcategory is appropriate given the importance of the subject site as a transition between the residential area to the north and the higher density CBD to the south. Final determination of points will be based upon architectural drawings submitted with the Site Plan. Staff will continue to work with the Applicant to refine the architectural design and supports 10 points for this benefit at this time.

#### Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

*Building Lot Termination (BLT):* The Applicant requests 6.6 points for the purchase of BLT easements or equivalent payment made for every 31,500 square feet of gross floor area comprising the 7.5% incentive density floor area. Points are granted by the calculation of BLTs as provided in Section 59.4.7.3.F of the Zoning Ordinance. Based on this calculation, Staff supports 6.6 points for this benefit at this time, with final calculations to be provided at the time of Site Plan.

7. *establish a feasible and appropriate provisional phasing plan for all structures, uses, rights-of-way, sidewalks, dedications, public benefits, and future preliminary and site plan applications.*

As submitted, the project design is built atop a parking structure that occupies almost the entire site. This will likely be constructed in one phase, but the phasing of the project will be determined at Site Plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Sketch Plan application satisfies the findings under Section 59.4.5.4 of the Zoning Ordinance and substantially conforms to the recommendations of the Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Sketch Plan with the conditions specified at the beginning of this report.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. 2008 M-NCPPC Staff Report: Silver Place Charrette
- B. Community Correspondence
- C. Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan/ Mandatory Referral 2014047 Resolution 14-47
- D. Agency Letters
- E. Sketch Plan