




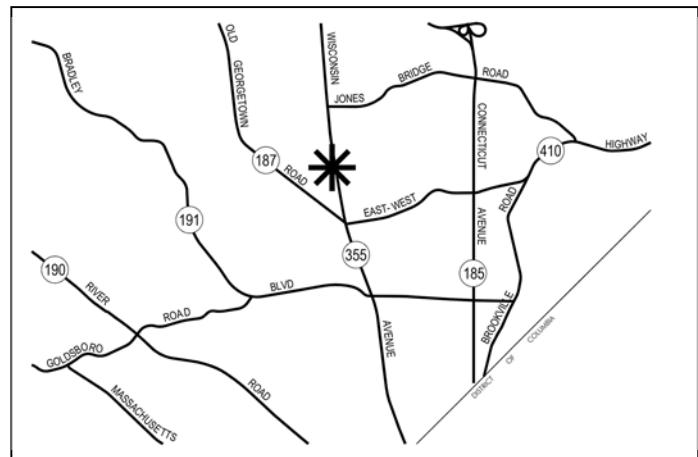
8000 Wisconsin Avenue Sketch Plan No. 320180120

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Completed: 4.20.18

Description

- Construction of a mixed-use project of up to 430,000 total square feet including up to 410,000 square feet of residential uses (up to 441 dwelling units) and up to 20,000 square feet of retail uses; project includes an allocation of Bethesda Overlay Zone density and a minimum of 25% MPDUs;
- Current use(s): Office, retail, public parking;
- Located south of Cordell Avenue between Woodmont Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue;
- 0.94 acres or 40,788 gross square feet of tract area zoned CR 3.0 C 3.0 R 2.75 H175', CR 5.0 C 5.0 R 5.0 H175', and the Bethesda Overlay Zone within the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*;
- Applicant: Aksoylu Properties;
- Acceptance date: February 2, 2018.



Summary

- Staff recommends approval of the Sketch Plan with conditions.
- The Project density is comprised of the following: 128,952 square feet of mapped density; an allocation of Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) density of up to 219,130 square feet, the final amount of which will be determined at the time of Site Plan; and approximately 81,918 square feet of additional MPDU Density.
- The proposal will redevelop the site with a mixed-use building, including 25% moderately priced dwelling units, minimum parking, structured parking, exceptional design, and energy conservation and generation.
- Provision of 25% MPDUs allows additional height necessary to accommodate MPDUs above 17.5%; eliminates the Project's requirement to purchase BLTs; from participating in the Park Impact Payment (PIP) typically required for the allocation of BOZ density; and reduces the number of CR Zone public benefit point categories to those otherwise required by the BOZ.
- Staff has not received community correspondence regarding the Sketch Plan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS	3
SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION	6
Site Vicinity and Analysis	
SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION	8
Proposal	
Uses and Density	
Buildings	
Open Space	
Environment	
Transportation	
Sector Plan Conformance	
Community Outreach	
SECTION 4: PROJECT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS	14

SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

Staff recommends approval of Sketch Plan No. 320180120, for a mixed-use building of up to 430,000 total square feet including up to 410,000 square feet of residential uses (up to 441 dwelling units), including 25% MPDUs, and up to 20,000 square feet of retail uses on 40,788 square feet of land, zoned CR 3.0 C 3.0 R 2.75 H175', CR 5.0 C 5.0 R 5.0 H175' and within the Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ). The Project includes an allocation of Bethesda Overlay Zone density of up to 219,130 square feet. The provision of 25% MPDUs eliminates the requirement of contributing to a Park Impact Payment (PIP) typically associated with an allocation of BOZ density (59.4.9.2.C.3.c.iii). The following site development elements shown on the latest electronic version as of the date of this Staff Report submitted via ePlans to the M-NCPPC are required except as modified by the conditions below:

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 430,000 square feet of total development, including an allocation of up to 219,130 square feet of Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) density, on the Subject Property for up to 441 dwelling units and up to 20,000 square feet of retail uses. The maximum number of dwelling units and non-residential density will be determined at Preliminary Plan and the final allocation of BOZ density will be determined at Site Plan.

2. Height

The development is limited to a maximum height of 199 feet due to the provision of MPDUs above 17.5%, as specified in Section 59.4.9.2.3.b of the Zoning Ordinance. The Project's maximum height will be determined at the time of Site Plan but will not exceed 199 feet.

3. Incentive Density

Section 59.4.7.3.D.6.a.v permits projects providing at least 20% MPDUs to proceed without satisfying other public benefit categories, however, the Bethesda Overlay Zone requires that the Project achieve a minimum of 10 points for exceptional design and 15 points for energy generation and conservation. The requirements of Division 59.4.7 and the *CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines* must be fulfilled for each public benefit listed below, unless modifications are made under Section 59.7.3.3.I. Final points will be established at Site Plan approval.

- a. Diversity of Uses and Activities, achieved through affordable housing;
- b. Quality of Building and Site Design, achieved through exceptional design and structured parking; and
- c. Protection of the Natural Environment, achieved through energy conservation and generation.

4. Building Design

- a. Prior to submittal of the Site Plan, the Applicant must submit a revised architectural design concept to the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) that addresses concerns raised at the DAP meeting on April 4, 2018.
- b. Design the Wisconsin Avenue façade to have a human-scaled presence on the street and reduce uniformity with the adjacent buildings through design by considering the following:
 - i. Provide building articulation such as step backs, glazing and material changes,
 - ii. Provide building separation to ensure the design allows for light and air and reduces shadows cast onto public spaces,
 - iii. Provide a base that includes articulation and varied heights to mitigate a monolithic or overpowering appearance, and
 - iv. Clarify the Project's relationship to the public space on 7900 Wisconsin Avenue.

5. Streetscape

The Applicant must install the Bethesda Streetscape Standard along the Site frontages, including the undergrounding of utilities.

6. Bus Rapid Transit

The Applicant must set back the building along the Wisconsin Façade to accommodate the future master planned bus rapid transit station at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Cordell Avenue. The full extent of the set back will be determined at Site Plan.

7. Bicycle Facilities

The Applicant must coordinate with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to participate in the implementation of master-planned separated bicycle lanes along the project's Woodmont Avenue frontage.

8. Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs)

The Applicant must provide on the Subject Property a minimum of 25% of the total units as Moderately Priced Dwelling Units. The development must provide MPDUs in accordance with Chapter 25A.

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, as appropriate:

- a. Fire and Rescue access and facility details;
- b. Building shadow study
- c. Provide details and cross sections showing appropriate soil volumes associated with the new plantings per the Sector Plan;
- d. Forest Conservation requirements, as applicable;
- e. Demonstration of how each public benefit satisfies the Zoning Ordinance and Incentive Density Implementation Guideline requirements;
- f. Address the SITES & LEED recommendations of the Sector Plan, specifically related to energy efficiency and building design features;
- g. 35% Green cover;
- h. Submit a Noise analysis with the Preliminary Plan that addresses applicable noise sources based on onsite field recordings made during representative time periods. The analysis must also show the existing and 20-year projected noise contours and/or provide 3-D modeling as appropriate (3-D modeling must reflect the existing and 20-year projected noise levels) and address the proposed mitigation techniques;

- i. Necessary public right-of-way dedication;
- j. Transportation Impact Study;
- k. Traffic Mitigation Agreement to participate in the Bethesda Transportation Demand Management District and achieve the Sector Plan 55% NADMS goal; and
- l. Incorporate bird-safe design into the building architecture;
- m. Stormwater Management (SWM) concept approval (and subsequent plan) to address the *Bethesda Downtown Plan* recommendations regarding SWM;
- n. Address any existing/ future utility conflicts of other site limitations, which may need to be rectified to achieve the proposed streetscape plantings; and
- o. Coordination with MCDOT in accordance with that agency's letter, dated April 5, 2018.

SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

Site Vicinity and Analysis

Subject Property

The Site (Subject Property or Property) consists of an assemblage of properties in the “Woodmont” subdivision, located between Wisconsin Avenue and Woodmont Avenue and south of Cordell Avenue, in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor District of the Bethesda Downtown area. The Property has a tract area of approximately 0.94 acres, or 40,788 square feet.



Figure 1 - Aerial View

The Property is within the area encompassed by the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* (the Sector Plan), is within a ½ mile of the Bethesda Metro Station, falls within the Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD), High

Performance Area and Height Incentive Area. To the west, the Site is immediately adjacent to the Woodmont Triangle District.

Site Analysis

The Property is zoned CR 3.0 C 3.0 R 2.75 H175' and CR 5.0 C 5.0 R 5.0 H175' within the Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ). The Site is comprised of several lots (40,788 SF), which are improved with commercial/ professional uses and a public surface parking lot, "Lot 43." Lot 43 was subject to Mandatory Referral 2012027 (Attachment B), which reviewed the disposition and sale of the County-owned public parking lot. The Site has frontage on Woodmont Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. 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.

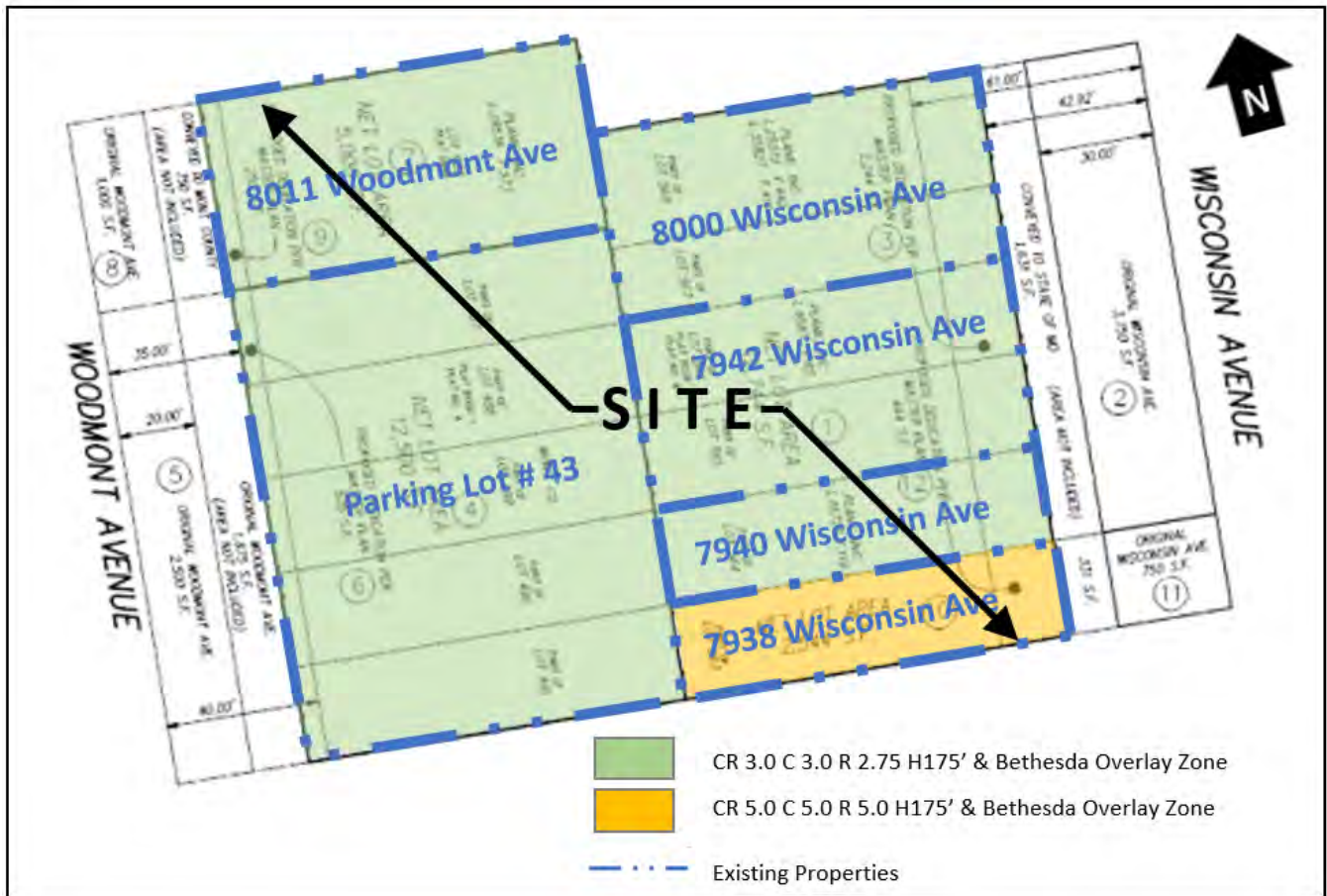


Figure 2 – Zoning Map

Surrounding Uses

The Property is surrounded by a mix of uses and is between two recently approved projects that were subject to the 1994 *Bethesda Central Business District Sector Plan* and 2006 *Woodmont Triangle Amendment*. Immediately adjacent to the north is the recently approved 14-story residential building, 8008 Wisconsin Avenue, that will include up to 130 dwelling units and 4,000 square feet of ground floor retail (Site Plan 820160130; CR 3.0 C 3.0 R 2.75 H145'). To the south of the site is the recently approved 17-story residential building, 7900 Wisconsin Avenue, that will include up to 475 dwelling units, 20,000 square feet of ground floor retail, and 11,000 square feet of public use space (Site Plan 820130170; CR 5.0 C 5.0 R 5.0 H175'). Directly to the west of the Property, across Woodmont Avenue, is a block of two-to-three story commercial buildings in the CR 5.0 C 5.0 R 5.0 H175' Zone.

Across Wisconsin Avenue, to the east, is a block of one-to-two story commercial buildings in the CR 3.0 C 3.0 R 3.0 H90' Zone.

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposal

The Sketch Plan application (Project) proposes to redevelop the Property with a maximum of up to 430,000 gross square feet of development (an FAR of 8.53) for up to 441 multi-family units, including 25% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs), and up to 20,000 square feet of retail uses in a mixed-use building up to 199 feet in height. Density is subject to change at the time of Preliminary Plan approval. The Project includes an allocation of density from the Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) of up to 219,130 square feet. The final amount of density to be purchased from the BOZ and final building height will be determined at the time of Site Plan.



Figure 3 - Proposed Sketch Plan

Project Density

The maximum density proposed for this Site includes the mapped density provided by the zone, the density attributable to the 25% MPDUs, and an allocation of density from the Bethesda Overlay Zone. The specific densities requested as part of the Subject Application are as follows:

- a. Mapped Density: The Site has an overall mapped density of approximately 128,952 square feet of gross floor area (an FAR of 3.16). The Project proposes implementing the entire mapped density as follows: 20,000 square feet of commercial use and 108,952 square feet of residential use;
- b. MPDU Density: 82,000 square feet of MPDUs;¹ and

¹Assuming an average dwelling unit size of 738 square feet, 82,000 square feet of MPDU density equates to approximately 111 MPDUs, or 25% of the Project's proposed 441 dwelling units. As a result of the Project's provision of 25% MPDUs, MPDU density is not counted toward the mapped density.

- c. Bethesda Overlay Zone Density: 219,130 square feet of BOZ density (an FAR of 5.37) attributed toward residential uses. In accordance with Section 59.4.9.2.C.3.c.iii of the Zoning Ordinance, projects providing at least 25% MPDUs are exempt from paying the BOZ Park Impact Payment (PIP).

Building Height

Although the Site's mapped zone limits building height to 175 feet, the Project proposes an additional 24 feet of height, to 199 feet, as allowed for the provision of 25% MPDUs. This additional height is permissible because the Property is located within the "Height Incentive Area" of the BOZ (Section 59.4.9.2.E) and because Section 59.4.9.2.C.3.b of the Zoning Ordinance states:

[i]f a project exceeds 17.5% MPDUs and is located in the Height Incentive Area as delineated in Subsection E, the height limit of the applicable zone does not apply to the extent required to provide MPDUs, ... [t]he additional height is calculated as the floor area provided for MPDUs above 15% divided by the average residential floor plate area, where each whole number and each remaining fraction allows an increase of 12 feet.

As proposed, the average residential floor plate measures approximately 21,712 square feet in area and the average dwelling unit size is proposed to be approximately 738 square feet. The Project is proposed to include 44 additional MPDUs beyond the minimum required at 15%, which amounts to approximately 32,472 square feet of gross floor area.¹ Therefore, the Applicant is seeking approval to increase the allowable building height by two floors (24 feet) to 199 feet.

Buildings

Architecture is conceptual at the time of Sketch Plan. The concept envisions the proposed building as an infill development within an urban block of downtown Bethesda. As presented to the Design Advisory Panel on February 28, 2018 and April 4, 2018, the building is anticipated to reach a height of 199 feet, due to its provision of additional affordable housing, and bridge the gap between the recently-approved 8008 Wisconsin Avenue (Site Plan 820160130; maximum height of 143 feet) and under-construction 7900 Wisconsin Avenue (Site Plan 820130170; maximum height of 174 feet). Figures 4 and 5 show the Site's relationship to the adjacent development approvals.

¹ In accordance with Section 59.4.9.2.C.3.b., projects located with the Height Incentive Area are not limited to the mapped height to the extent additional height is necessary to accommodate MPDUs. Additional height is calculated as the floor area for MPDUs above the 15% requirement, divided by the average floor plate area, where each whole number and each remaining fraction result in an additional 12 feet of height.



Figure 4 – Adjacent Project 8008 Wisconsin Avenue

(Left: Cordell and Woodmont facades, looking southeast; Right: Wisconsin and Cordell facades, looking southwest)



Figure 5 – Adjacent Project 7900 Wisconsin Avenue

(Left: Woodmont facade, looking east; Right: Wisconsin facade, looking southwest)

During their April 4, 2018 meeting, the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) expressed concerns about the architect’s approach to addressing the challenges of the Site. The design needs to mediate between the distinct character of both Wisconsin Avenue and Woodmont Avenue as well as the architectural character of the adjacent development approvals, 8008 Wisconsin and 7900 Wisconsin. Toward that end, the DAP recommended the following:

1. Break up the long imposing façade along Wisconsin Avenue through increased tower separation and tower step-backs or a meaningful alternative treatment method such as shifted or angled facades.
2. Explore the relationship of the building base to the street and pedestrian scale and ensure that the base is articulated with varied height and not too monolithic or overpowering. Either align the base with the adjacent properties or offset further.

3. Clarify the relationship of the building with the public space on the 7900 Wisconsin site. Show how the building will be viewed and articulated.
4. Public Benefit Points: The applicant should return to the panel prior to Site Plan submission to ensure that the proposal is on track to receive the minimum 10 Exceptional Design points required in the Bethesda Overlay Zone and has incorporated the following recommendations.

Precedent images, provided by the Applicant, are shown in Figure 6 to highlight some of the architectural concepts envisioned for the Project. Additional details for the architectural concept are provided in Attachment C and additional context and discussion for the DAP's recommendations are included in the April 4, 2018 DAP meeting summary (Attachment D).

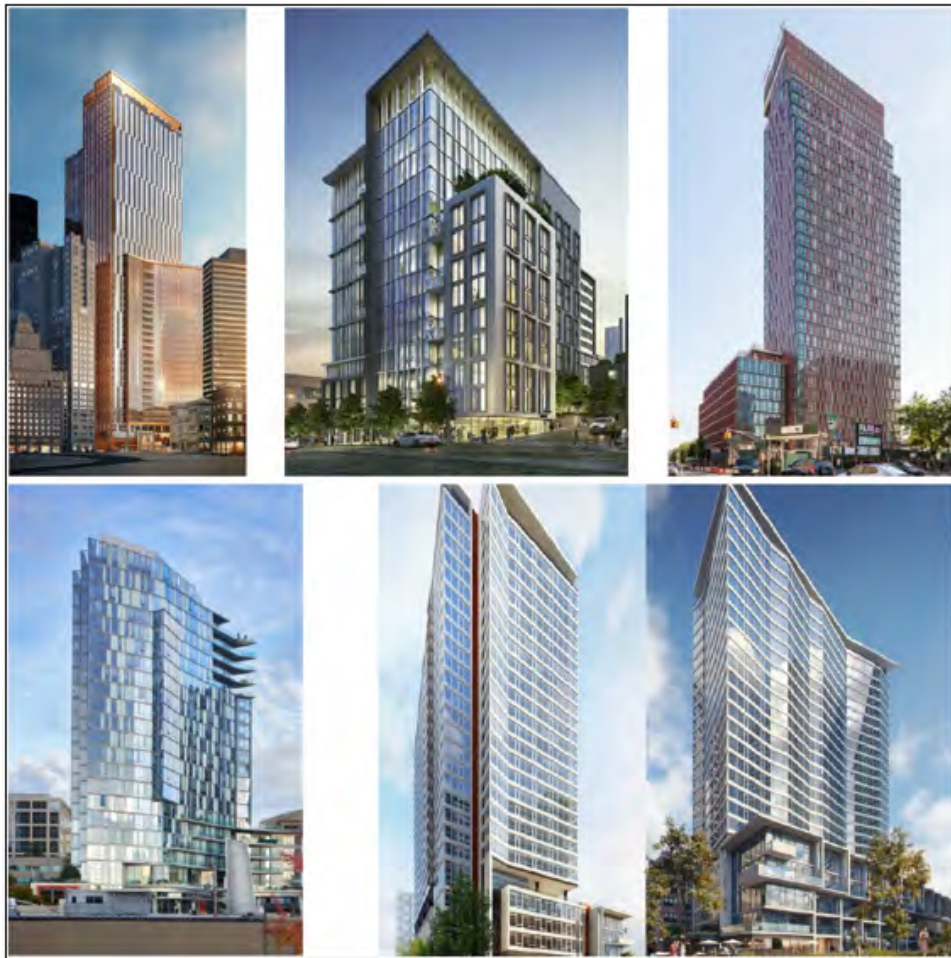


Figure 6 – Precedent Images

Open Space

The Project is not required to provide public open space because the tract area is less than one acre and the Site has two or fewer frontages on public roadways (59.4.5.4.B.1.a). The Subject Property tract area measures 0.94 acres or 40,788 gross square feet and the Site has frontage on both Wisconsin Avenue and Woodmont Avenue.

Environment

Environmental Guidelines/ Forest Conservation

There are no environmentally sensitive features, such as streams, wetlands floodplains or associated buffers, associated with the site. The site is located within the Rock Creek watershed, a Use I watershed.

This Project is subject to the Chapter 22A, Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law, but is exempt from the requirement to submit a Forest Conservation Plan under Section 22A-5(s)(1) because the proposed activity occurs on a tract of land less than 1.5 acres with no existing forest, or existing specimen or champion tree, and the afforestation requirements would not exceed 10,000 square feet. Forest conservation exemption 42018105E was confirmed on December 14, 2017 (Attachment F).

Noise

The Project is adjacent to Woodmont Avenue, an arterial roadway, and Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355), a major highway, therefore a noise analysis is necessary at Preliminary Plan to address the residential building and any associated common open space areas. The Applicant must provide confirmation if nearby roadways have an average daily traffic (ADT) of 5,000 vehicles or more and must address all applicable noise sources/roadways based on onsite field recordings made during representative time periods. The analysis must show the existing and 20-year projected noise contours and/or provide 3-D modeling, as appropriate, (the 3-D modeling would need to reflect the existing and 20-year projected noise levels) and address any proposed mitigation techniques, as appropriate.

Stormwater Management (SWM)

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. The ultimate SWM plan approval should also address the *Bethesda Downtown Plan* recommendations regarding SWM.

Transportation

Access and Circulation

Pedestrian access to the Site will be from the established sidewalk network and will be enhanced by streetscape improvements along each of the Site frontages, consistent with the Bethesda Streetscape Standards.

Vehicular access to the Property is proposed directly from Woodmont Avenue through a consolidated garage access point and loading bay (two separate, but adjacent entrances) at the southwestern corner of the Site. This configuration is driven by the Site's proximity to the nearby intersections, existing access points on Woodmont Avenue, and a desire to restrict vehicular access on Wisconsin Avenue near the master planned Bus Rapid Transit Station.

Resident vehicle parking is proposed to be contained within a structured below-grade garage, with the final quantity of parking spaces determined at Site Plan based on the final number of residential dwelling units. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the Property will be provided along both Woodmont Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue (Figure 7).



Figure 7 - Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

Transit Connectivity

The immediate area is well served by transit that includes the Red Line Bethesda Metrorail Station (located within ½ mile of the site), Metrobus, RideOn, the Bethesda Circulator, future Purple Line, and future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station along the Site's Wisconsin Avenue frontage. The 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* identifies the intersection of Cordell Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue as a future station location for the MD 355 South Corridor. 8008 Wisconsin (Site Plan 820160130) provided a building setback and easement, measuring 10 feet deep along the entire frontage, to accommodate pedestrian circulation around the BRT station. The Subject Property will continue this setback along the Wisconsin Avenue frontage, with the final limits of the setback and easement area determined as part of the future Preliminary Plan review.

Master Plan Roadways and Pedestrian/Bikeway Facilities

The 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* and 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* recommend the following along property frontages:

1. Wisconsin Avenue, along the eastern site frontage, as a major highway (M-6) with a minimum right-of-way width of 122 feet, and an additional 10 foot wide easement area for the future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station at Cordell Avenue; and
2. Woodmont Avenue, along the western site frontage, as an arterial roadway (A-68) with a minimum right-of-way width of 80', and separated bicycle lanes (CT-4).

Sector-Planned Transportation Demand Management

The Sector Plan encourages a Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS) of 55%, averaged between employees and residents of downtown Bethesda. In order to meet this goal, downtown Bethesda is organized into a Transportation Demand Management District (TMD) that strives to promote travel by means other than single occupancy vehicles. As a residential project of more than 100 dwelling units within the Bethesda TMD, the development is required to enter into a Traffic Mitigation Agreement (TMAg) with the Planning Board and

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to participate in the Bethesda TMD. Specific details of the TMAg will be determined during the Preliminary Plan review.

Adequate Public Facilities

The Project must satisfy adequate public facilities tests for both transportation and schools at the time of Preliminary Plan. As Proposed, the Project is estimated to result in a net reduction of total peak-hour person trips when compared to the existing uses on the Site. Trip generation will be approved as part of the Preliminary Plan, however, the estimated trip generation associated with the Sketch Plan indicates that the traffic analysis will be satisfied with a transportation exemption statement. Additionally, as a residential project, the Applicant must satisfy the Schools Adequate Public Facilities test at the time of Preliminary Plan.

Community Outreach

The Applicant held a pre-submittal public meeting at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center on November 16, 2017 and has complied with all submittal and noticing requirements. Staff has not received any correspondence on the Sketch Plan application as of the date of this staff report.

SECTION 4: 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:"

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 1: Data Table

Sketch Plan Data Table (Section 59.4)		
Development Standard	Permitted/ Required	Proposed
Tract Area (Square Feet/ Acres)		
CR 3.0 C-3.0 R-2.75 H-175'		
8000 Wisconsin Ave.		6,598 (0.15)
7940 Wisconsin Ave.		3,298 (0.08)
7942 Wisconsin Ave.		6,598 (0.15)
8011 Woodmont Ave.		6,000 (0.14)
County Parking Lot 43		<u>15,000 (0.34)</u>
Subtotal CR 3.0		37,494 (0.86)
CR 5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-175'		
7938 Wisconsin Ave.		3,294 (0.08)
Total Tract Area		40,788 (0.94)
Site Area (Square Feet/ Acres)		
Prior Dedication		8,000 (0.18)
Proposed Dedication	n/a	3,563 (0.08)
Site Area (Tract Area – Dedications)		29,225 (0.67)
Residential Density (GFA/ FAR)		
CR 3.0 C-3.0 R-2.75 H-175'	103,109 (2.75)	
CR 5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-175'	16,470 (5.0)	
Subtotal	119,579 (2.93)	108,952 (2.67)
Commercial Density (GFA/ FAR)		
CR 3.0 C-3.0 R-2.75 H-175'	112,482 (3.0)	
CR 5.0 C-5.0 R-5.0 H-175'	16,470 (5.0)	
Subtotal	128,952 (3.16)	20,000 (0.49)
Total Mapped Density (GFA/FAR)	112,482 (3.0) 16,470 (5.0) 128,952 (3.16)	128,952 (3.16)
MPDU Density (GFA/FAR)*	n/a	81,918 (2.00)
Bethesda Overlay Zone Density (GFA/ FAR)	n/a	219,130 (5.37)
Total GFA/ FAR	n/a	430,000 (10.54)
Building Height	175 feet	199 feet**
Public Open Space (min)	0%	0%
Green Cover	35%	35%
Minimum Setbacks	n/a	0

* MPDU density, assumed at an average size of 738 square feet per unit for all 111 MPDUs, is excluded from the Gross Floor Area.

** Section 59.4.9.2.C.3.b eliminates the height requirement to the extent necessary to provide MPDUs beyond 17.5%. These additional 44 MPDUs account for an additional 32,472 square feet of residential density. Given the Project's estimated average floorplate is of 21,712 SF, the Applicant requests two additional floors (24 feet) of additional height to accommodate the additional MPDUs.

The Application will provide the minimum required number of bicycle parking spaces within the building, which will be determined at the time of Site Plan. The final number of vehicular parking spaces will be determined at Site Plan based on the residential units and retail square footage.

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

a) Implement the recommendations of applicable master plans.

The Project substantially conforms to the recommendations for the Property included in the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*. The Property is designated as Site 60, on pages 99 and 100 of the Plan, within the area identified as the “Wisconsin Avenue District,” the main artery through the center of Downtown Bethesda. The Downtown Plan generally recommends increasing:

1. Parks and open spaces, including new civic greens at Veteran’s Park, Bethesda Farm Women’s Cooperative Market, Capital Crescent Trail and new urban parks, pathways and gateways.
2. Affordable housing, including the preservation of existing market-rate affordable housing, providing a mix of housing options and the provision of Moderately Priced Dwelling Units in exchange for development incentives.
3. Environmental innovation, including more energy-efficient buildings, better stormwater management, improved sidewalks and bicycle routes, and other measures to enhance community health and quality of life.
4. Economic competitiveness, based on new development, public amenities and proximity to public transit to attract businesses and visitors from throughout the region, and foster entrepreneurship and innovation.

The Project specifically addresses the following goals as outlined in the Wisconsin Avenue District section of the Plan:

- *Encourage infill and reinvestment on underutilized commercial sites and private surface parking lots.*

The Project will redevelop several single-story retail buildings and Public Parking Lot 43, a component of the Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD), with high-density residential uses and street-activating retail uses. The Project will help contribute to an on-going transformation of the block bounded by Wisconsin Avenue, Woodmont Avenue, Cordell Avenue, and Fairmont Avenue, when considered in context with other recently approved projects.

- *Encourage mixed-income/affordable housing near transit stations.*

The Project will add up to 111 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs) within walking distance to the Bethesda Metro Station, the future Purple Line Station, and future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station. The proposed MPDUs will help further one of the primary goals, affordable housing, of the Sector Plan and Bethesda Overlay Zone.

- *Develop compact nodes that place the highest intensity in those centers, provide distinctive infill buildings and step down to lower densities and heights near the edges.*

The Project is an infill redevelopment between the adjacent 7900 Wisconsin Avenue (Site Plan 820130170), to the north, and 8008 Wisconsin Avenue (Site Plan 820160130), to the

south. The Project will contribute to the vibrant mixed-use identity taking shape within this block. The combination of multifamily dwelling units, ground floor retail uses, and amenities proposed for the block will create an appropriate transition between the adjacent Woodmont Triangle District and more intensely developed urban core to the south of the Property.

- *Encourage high-performance buildings and sites nearest the established centers.*

The Project proposes to incorporate energy-efficient building systems to exceed the ASHRAE 90.1 standard by a minimum of 17.5%, as required by the Bethesda Overlay Zone. In addition, intensive green roof systems and planters are proposed to cover a minimum of 35% of the Property's lot area to increase the overall green cover. Dedications along Wisconsin Avenue and Woodmont Avenue will help to enhance the pedestrian experience along the Property. Additional planting and pedestrian circulation areas along these public right-of-way frontages will allow for an improved streetscape in both the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor and Woodmont Triangle Districts.

- *Create green, active and walkable sidewalks that are designed to balance pedestrian and retail activity with vehicular and BRT traffic along this major corridor.*

The Project's proposed right-of-way dedications and the undergrounding of existing utilities, along Wisconsin and Woodmont Avenues, will help to provide a wide pedestrian through zone that is lined with street trees, planting and furnishings. In addition to providing right-of-way dedications, the Project's sidewalk width is designed in accordance with the Design Guidelines recommendations for these streetscapes such that additional free and clear sidewalk width is accommodated.

- *Design tall buildings along Wisconsin Avenue to have a human-scaled presence on the street, reduced uniformity and compatibility with edge neighborhoods.*

Although the architectural concept is sufficient for Sketch Plan approval, the Project's proposed building massing along Wisconsin Avenue must be refined prior to the Site Plan submittal to address deficiencies related to the Bethesda Design Guidelines and Sector Plan.

Of specific concern is the Project's architectural concept along the Wisconsin Avenue façade, which features a 200-foot continuous wall that lacks a human-scaled presence on the street. As proposed, this massing reads as an overwhelming monolithic base without building articulation, step back, or separation between adjacent properties and does not achieve the design goals outlined in the Sector Plan. The architectural concept will be addressed through the Site Plan review, which will ensure that the project satisfies Section 3.1.1.B.2.a, "Building Form" of the Sector Plan and comments raised by the Design Advisory Panel during its meeting on April 4, 2018. As conditioned in this Staff Report, the Project will be subject to further architectural refinement at the time of Site Plan.

As conditioned, the Project is in general conformance with the *2017 Bethesda Downtown Plan*.

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

The Project will redevelop the existing low-density commercial sites with a higher-density residential building, that includes retail uses and underground parking, to maximize residential development in close proximity to the Metro. 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 and 25% MPDUs in a variety of unit types, offering housing opportunities for a range of incomes close to the numerous transit options of downtown Bethesda. The Project facilitates all travel modes by improving the streetscape along its two frontages, accommodating the master planned Wisconsin Avenue Bus Rapid Transit, and participating in the Woodmont Avenue separated bicycle lanes. 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 will provide a primarily residential building as well as a moderate amount of street-level retail. The height and density is compatible with the desired character of the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor District and the Project will serve as a transition between the Woodmont Triangle District and the more intense development of the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor to the south.

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

The Sector Plan identified several districts within Downtown Bethesda to guide development compatibility. The Subject Property is within the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor District, which is intended primarily for commercial uses, however, the entire district is envisioned as a symbolic downtown center that reflects the overall mixed-use character of Bethesda. The northern portion of the Wisconsin Avenue District, of which the Subject Property is a part, anticipates development activity that will increase the Downtown's employee, visitor, and residential base. The Project provides the appropriate land use, as recommended in the Sector Plan, and will add a significant amount of affordable housing, further diversifying the land use within the district.

- 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.*

Section 59.4.7.3.D.6.a.v. of the Zoning Ordinance states that a project providing a minimum of 20% MPDUs does not have to satisfy any other public benefit category. The Sketch Plan proposes 25% MPDUs, or Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs approved equivalent, on the Subject Property, and therefore does not have to satisfy any other category. The Bethesda Overlay Zone, however, requires that the Project satisfy the exceptional design and energy conservation and generation categories to achieve the desired incentive density above the standard method limit. Final determination of public benefit points will be determined at the time of Site Plan.

b) General Development Requirements

i. *Site Access*

Vehicular site access will be provided via Woodmont Avenue. Pedestrian and bike access will be provided from the existing sidewalk and street network on both Woodmont Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue, and will be further enhanced by streetscape improvements. Site access will be safe and convenient.

ii. *Parking, Queuing, and Loading*

The development will provide parking and loading on-site in a safe and efficient manner. Final location, amount, and configuration will be determined at Site Plan.

iii. *Open Space and Recreation*

The Project is not required to provide public open space because the tract area is less than one acre and the Site has two or fewer frontages on public roadways (59.4.5.4.B.1.a). The Project will meet the Recreation Guidelines at the time of Site Plan.

iv. *General Landscaping and Outdoor Lighting*

The development will provide landscaping and outdoor lighting compatible with the surrounding development. Final design to be determined at Site Plan.

2. *substantially conform with the recommendations of the applicable master plan;*

As discussed in Finding 1.a. above, the Project substantially conforms to recommendations of the *2017 Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*. The Project will increase the supply of housing to serve a variety of income levels, redevelop under-utilized properties, and provide streetscape improvements that improve the safety and character of the existing streets.

The Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) was adopted July 18, 2017 specifically to implement the recommendations of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan as it relates to density, building heights, affordable housing, parks, and design. The BOZ sets a cap of overall development (32.4 million square feet) whereby the zoning approved for most properties retains the base density but increases the heights on respective sites. An Applicant can request an allocation of density over the base density to build to the maximum height permitted by the zone, as needed. An allocation of density from the BOZ typically requires a Park Impact Payment (PIP) of \$10/ square foot of BOZ density requested (which facilitates parkland acquisition in the downtown Bethesda area), however, this Application is exempt from the PIP payment because the Project will provide more than 25% MPDUs (59.4.9.2.C.3.c.iii). The Project is requesting an allocation of up to 219,130 square feet from the BOZ with the final amount of density allocated at the time of Site 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 conditioned, the conceptual building design will be compatible in height and scale with the existing and pending nearby development in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor District and adjacent Woodmont Triangle District. The Project will further explore its relationship with the adjacent buildings as the design develops in advance of Site Plan review.

5. *provides satisfactory general vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist access, circulation, parking, and loading;*

The Project provides satisfactory general vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist access, circulation, parking, and loading. The Project appropriately locates vehicular access and loading on Woodmont Avenue, thus eliminating curb cuts from Wisconsin Avenue, and accommodates the master planned Bus Rapid Transit Station at the corner of Cordell Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue along the Site frontage. Additionally, the Project will participate in the Woodmont Avenue separated bicycle lanes.

6. *propose an outline of public benefits that supports the requested incentive density and is appropriate for the specific community;*

Taking into account the considerations in Section 59.4.7.1.B, including the recommendations and objectives of the Sector Plan and any applicable design guidelines, the Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines, the size and configuration of the site and its relationship to adjacent properties, similar public benefits nearby, and additional enhancements related to the individual public benefits, Staff finds that the following outline of public benefits supports the Applicant's request for incentive density and is appropriate for the community surrounding the site, as described below. Sketch Plan establishes the public benefit categories with final public benefit points determined at the time of Site Plan.

Since the Project provides more than 20% MPDUs, the Bethesda Overlay Zone only requires that the Project satisfy the exceptional design and energy conservation and generation categories to achieve the desired incentive density above the standard method limit, however, the Applicant anticipates exceeding the minimum requirement by providing the public benefits listed in Table 2. Table 2 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 and differentiates between the required categories and "others provided" beyond the requirement of the zone.

Table 2: Public Benefits

Public Benefit Calculations		
Public Benefit	Incentive Density Points	
	Max Allowed	Requested
Required		
59.4.7.3D: Diversity of Uses and Activities		
Affordable Housing*	No Max	150
59.4.7.3E: Quality of Building and Site Design		
Exceptional Design*	30	10
59.4.7.3F: Protection & Enhancement of the Natural Environment		
Energy Conservation and Generation*	25	15
Subtotal Required		175
Others Provided		
59.4.7.3C: Connectivity and Mobility		
Minimum Parking*	20	10
59.4.7.3E: Quality of Building and Site Design		
Structured Parking	20	20
Subtotal Other		30
Total Public Benefit Points		205

* Sector Plan Priority

Connectivity and Mobility

Minimum Parking: The Applicant requests 10 points for providing fewer than the maximum allowed number of parking spaces. Points for this incentive are granted on a sliding scale from no points for providing the maximum allowable number of on-site spaces to 20 points for providing no more than the minimum numbers of spaces on site. This category is not required for the Project. Final determination will be made at Site Plan and Staff supports the Applicant’s request.

Diversity of Uses and Activities

Affordable Housing: The Applicant requests 150 points for providing 25% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs), including studios, one-bedroom units, two-bedroom units, and three-bedroom units, in accordance with the CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines. Points in this category are granted on a sliding scale at a rate of 15 points for every 1 percent of MPDUs greater than that required by law (59.4.9.2.C.3.d.ii). The final unit mix will be determined at Site Plan. Staff supports 150 points for this category.

Quality of Building and Site Design

Exceptional Design: The Applicant requests 10 points for building or site design that provides innovative solutions in response to the immediate context; creates a sense of place; enhances the public realm; introduces materials, forms, or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity; designs compact, infill development; and integrates low-impact development. Per the CR Guidelines, incentive density of 10 points is appropriate for development that meets all of the guideline criteria available for the category. As a site receiving an allocation of Bethesda Overlay Zone density, the Project is subject to the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) review, which will award points at the time of Site Plan based on the quality of the design.

The DAP has reservations about the Project’s architectural concept, however, panelists felt that the Project satisfied the Sketch Plan requirements for this category and had the potential to achieve 10 points if the

design is refined in accordance with the DAP's comments and Bethesda Design Guidelines. Since 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.

Structured Parking: The Applicant requests 20 points for providing all parking in a below-grade parking structure. This category is not required for the Project. Staff supports this request at this time.

Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

Energy Conservation and Generation: The Applicant requests 15 points for providing a project that exceeds the energy efficiency standards for new buildings by 17.5%. At the time of Site Plan, the Applicant will submit an energy use/ generation model. This category is a priority in the Sector Plan and a requirement of the Bethesda Overlay Zone. Staff supports the Applicant's request at this time.

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.*

The Project will be built in one phase.

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 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Sketch Plan with the conditions specified at the beginning of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Sketch Plan
- B. Mandatory Referral 2012027
- C. Architectural Precedent
- D. Design Advisory Panel Memorandum
- E. Agency Letters
- F. Forest Conservation Exemption 42018105E