



4 Bethesda Metro Center, Sketch Plan No. 320180110

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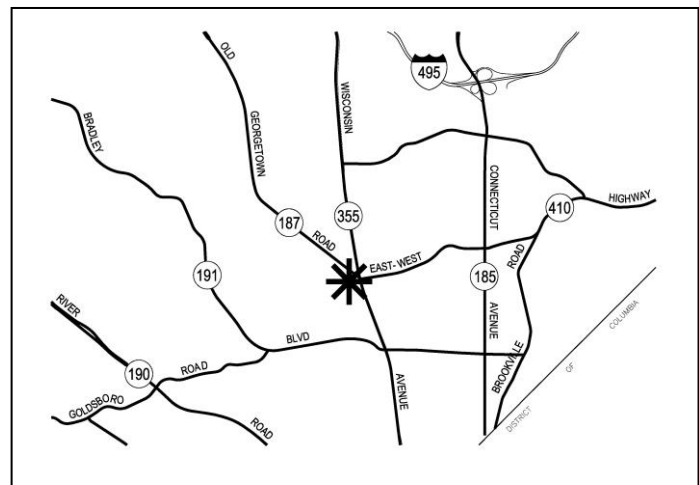
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Completed: 7/9/18

Description

- Sketch Plan: Construction of a mixed-use project of up to 1,092,242 total square feet (including 358,578 existing square feet to remain for 3 Bethesda Metro and 233,664 existing square feet to remain for the Hyatt Hotel) with up to 282 multi-family dwelling units (including 122 existing units to remain); requesting approval of two alternative development options for office and residential;
- Current use(s): food court and surrounding Metro Plaza;
- Located at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road;
- 4.34 acres or 71,905 gross square feet of tract area zoned CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H210 and CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H290, and the Bethesda Overlay Zone, in the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*;
- Applicant: BOP Bethesda Metro Center LLC;
- Acceptance date: February 1, 2018.



Summary

- Staff recommends approval of the Sketch Plan with conditions.
- Although the entire Bethesda Metro Center project is included in this Sketch Plan application, only a portion of the Property, the existing three-story "food court" building and a portion of the surrounding Metro Plaza is proposed for redevelopment. The 15-story office building, known as 3 Bethesda Metro Center and the hotel (currently operated as a Hyatt) are included in the density calculations and will remain.
- WMATA controls the underlying ground associated with the Site and has consented to the filing of the redevelopment.
- The Applicant proposes two alternate development options, discussed in detail in the Staff Report.
- In accordance with Section 59.7.3.3.C of the Zoning Ordinance, the Sketch Plan received a Planning Board extension postponing the hearing from April 26, 2018 to July 19, 2018.
- The proposal does not include an allocation of density from the Bethesda Overlay Zone and so is not required to make a Park Impact Payment (PIP).
- Staff has received considerable community correspondence regarding the open space and relationship to the surrounding context and is discussed in greater detail in the Staff Report.

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SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

SKETCH PLAN NO. 320180110

Staff recommends approval of Sketch Plan No. 320180110, for up to 1,092,242 total square feet (including 592,242 existing square feet to remain), on 4.34 acres of land, zoned CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H210 and CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H290, and Bethesda Overlay Zone. 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 1,092,242 square feet of total development, including the 592,242 square feet of existing square footage to remain. The maximum number and distribution of residential dwelling units and/or non-residential uses will be determined at Preliminary Plan.

2. Height

The CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H290-zoned building ("4 Bethesda Metro Center building") is limited to a maximum building height of 290 feet as measured from its building height measurement point illustrated on the Certified Site Plan.

3. Land Use

- a. The Applicant must select either the Residential or Commercial Development option at the time of Preliminary Plan
- b. If at Preliminary Plan the Applicant pursues the Commercial Development option, they must file a sketch plan amendment to address the following considerations:
 - i. Building design and relationship of the base with the open space areas;
 - ii. Pedestrian circulation through the site; and
 - iii. Design and function of the open space areas.

4. Incentive Density

The development must be constructed with the public benefits listed below, unless modifications are made under Section 59.7.3.3.I. 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.

- a. Major Public Facilities, achieved through transit access improvements and enhancements to the Metro bus bay area;
- b. Connectivity and Mobility, achieved through minimum parking;
- c. Quality of Building and Site Design, achieved through exceptional design, public open space, and structured parking; and

- d. Protection of the Natural Environment, achieved through the purchase of building lot terminations and energy conservation and generation.
5. Building Design
 - a. The Applicant must submit a revised architectural design concept to the Design Advisory Panel, addressing comments from the DAP enumerated in the Sketch Plan Findings, prior to submittal of any Site Plan application.
 - b. The Applicant must address the Bethesda Design Guidelines, Tower Separation minimum dimensions and further refinement of building massing using the “Tower: Menu of Methods to Reduce Bulk” for both Development options.
6. Open Space

The Applicant must provide approximately 42,000 square feet (28 percent of the Subject Property) of public open space on-site, with the final area and design to be determined at Site Plan.
7. Green Area

The Applicant must provide a minimum of 35% of the redeveloped site area as Green Cover, consistent with the Sector Plan. At time of Site Plan review, the Applicant must demonstrate good faith efforts to maximize the Green Area provided over the entire Subject Site.
8. Streetscape

The Applicant must install the Bethesda Streetscape Standard along the Subject Property’s right-of-way frontages, including the undergrounding of utilities, as illustrated on the Certified Site Plan.
9. Bicycle Facilities

The Applicant must coordinate with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to participate in the implementation of master-planned bicycle facilities along the Subject Property’s right-of-way frontages, including separated bicycle lanes on Woodmont Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, and Edgemoor Lane.
10. 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.
11. Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs)

For any development alternative required to provide MPDUS, the Applicant must provide on the Subject Property a minimum of 15% of the total new units as MPDUs in accordance with Chapter 25A.
12. Future Coordination for Preliminary Plan and Site Plan

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

 - a. Fire and Rescue access and facility details;
 - b. Streetscape details;
 - c. Building shadow study;
 - d. Physical scale model of the proposed development including surrounding existing development and site area;
 - e. Submit a preliminary/final forest conservation plan;

- f. Address the SITES & LEED recommendations of the Sector Plan, specifically related to energy efficiency and building design features;
- g. Provide a noise analysis at time of Preliminary Plan, or submit a waiver under Section 2.2.2 of the 1983 Noise Guidelines;
- h. Address the conflicts between the credited tree canopies and building interface by shifting the locations of the trees further away from the existing and proposed buildings and/or reducing the canopy credit to reflect the zone of clearance pruning that would occur;
- i. Provide details and cross sections showing appropriate soil volumes of no less than 600 cubic feet for canopy trees, in accordance with the Sector Plan;
- j. Address the Sector Plan recommendations and design guidelines regarding stormwater management;
- k. Streetscape details;
- l. Address Bird-Safe Design per the Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines.
- m. Traffic Mitigation Agreement to participate in the Bethesda Transportation Demand Management District and achieve the Sector Plan 55% NADMS goal;
- n. Necessary dedication along frontage roadways and covenant for future dedication along North Lane and Edgemoor Lane in response to existing buildings to remain;
- o. Demonstrate how each public benefit satisfies the Zoning Ordinance and Incentive Density Implementation Guideline requirements.
- p. Provide a strategy and long-term commitment for programming the public spaces.

SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

Site Vicinity and Analysis

Site Vicinity

The Property is surrounded by a mix of residential and non-residential uses. Directly adjacent to the Property to the north is the 200' tall Clark building. Confronting the Property, across Edgemoor Lane, is the Metropolitan (a 14-story multi-family residential building), and Public Parking Garage No. 49. Diagonally across the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and East-West Highway/Old Georgetown Road, to the east, is the 16-story Chevy Chase Bank Building. The Newlands building (a 17-story office building) and old Post Office building are located to the south. Confronting the Property to the west across Woodmont Avenue, is the 13-story Chase Condominium, a single-family dwelling that is now operated as professional offices, and a proposed 15-story residential building (the Edgemont II).

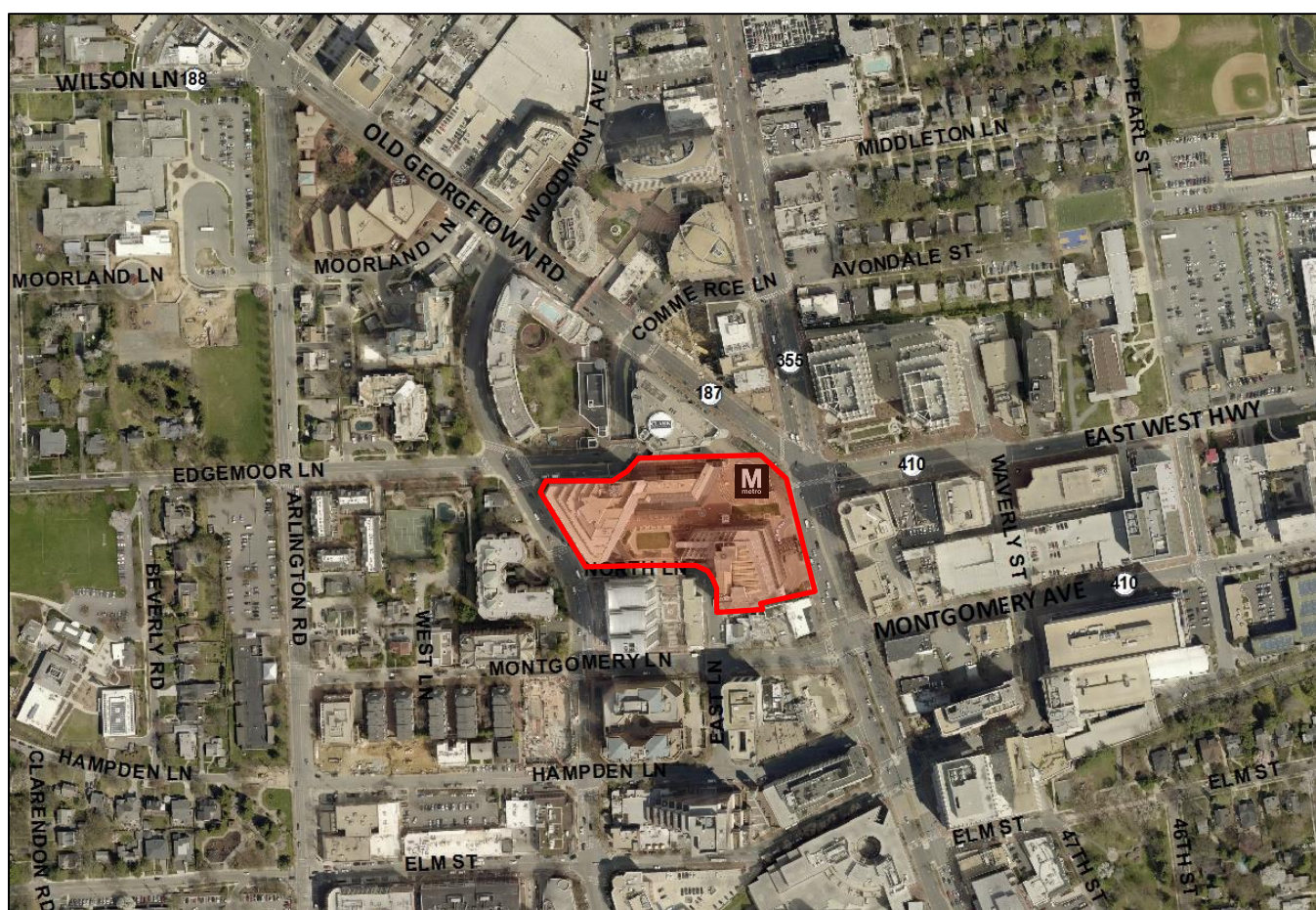


Figure 1-Aerial View

Site Analysis

The Property is zoned CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H210 and CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H290 and is within the Bethesda Overlay Zone (Figure 2). No new building construction above the plaza level is proposed for the H210 portion of the site. The Property is currently improved with an office building (3 Bethesda Metro Center), the Hyatt hotel (including retail/restaurant uses), the Metro Plaza, and below-grade parking. A portion of the existing 3 Bethesda Metro

Center office building will be removed, including the "food court" and a small bump-out in the southwest corner of the Metro Plaza. The existing Metro Plaza is located between the office and hotel, with frontage on Wisconsin Avenue. The existing bus facilities located below the Metro Plaza serve as an important transit hub for the County – with service by 14 Metro bus and Ride-On routes. The Property is located on top of the Bethesda Metro Station and falls within the Bethesda Parking Lot District (PLD). The Property is within the area encompassed by the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* (Sector Plan).

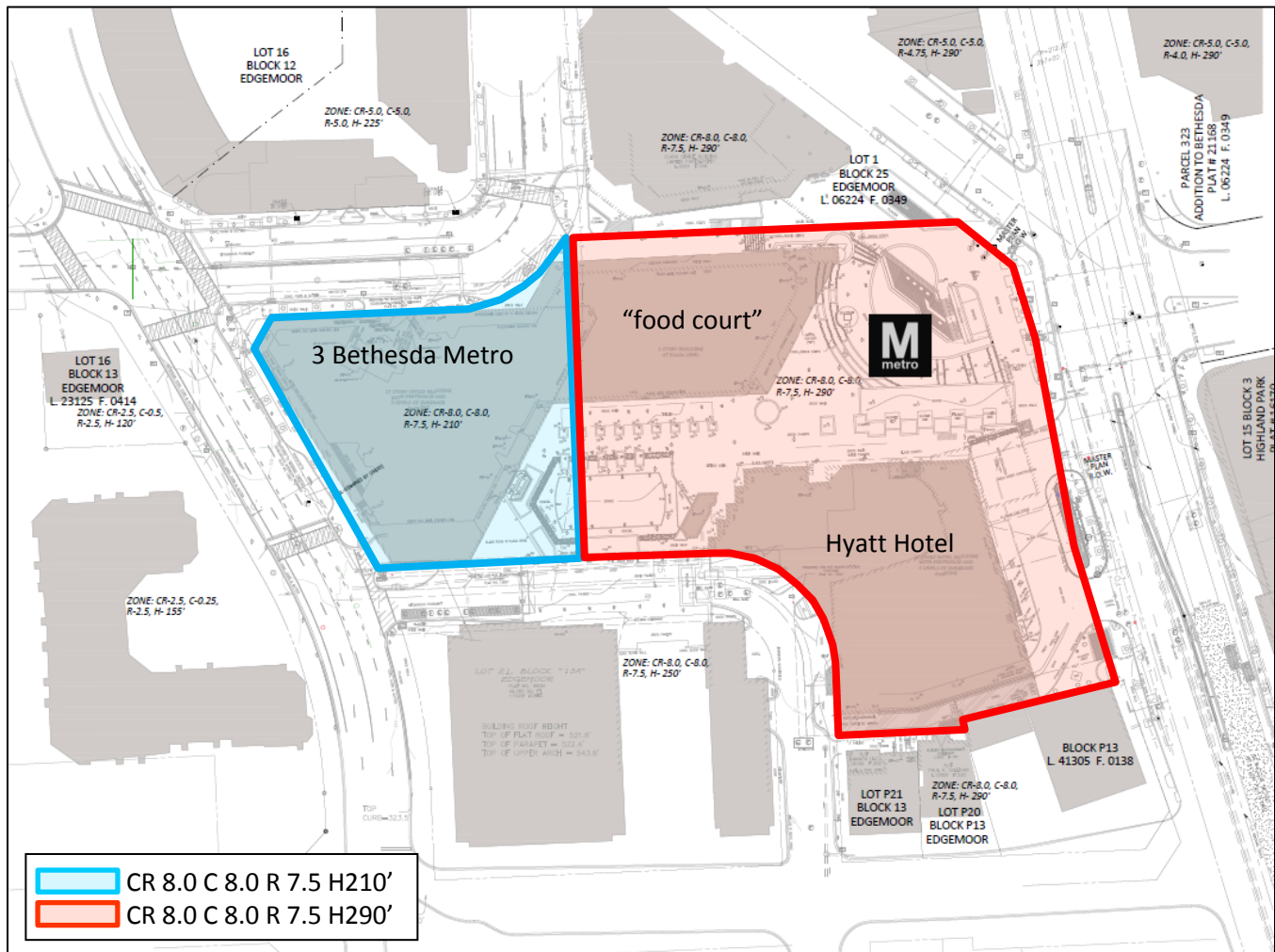


Figure 2-Existing Conditions and Zoning

Collectively, the existing buildings contain approximately 632,774 square feet of gross floor area (Subject Property or Property). The Property is a recorded lot, Part of Lot 37, Block 13, in the "Edgemoor" Subdivision. The Property has a net lot area of approximately 151,714 square feet (or 3.48 acres) and, including land previously dedicated to public use, a total tract area of approximately 189,283 square feet (4.35 acres). That portion of the Property that is proposed for redevelopment for 4 Bethesda Metro Center is approximately 71,973 square feet.

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 known historic properties on site.

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Previous Approvals

The Planning Board approved a Project Plan (No. 919810050) for the Property on September 2, 1981 for a 231,164 square-foot, 400-room hotel, and 400,110 square feet of office and retail uses, as subsequently modified by various amendments (when amended, the Project Plan was reclassified under Project Plan No. 919920040). A Preliminary Plan (No. 119810680) was approved for the Property on June 18, 1981. Site Plan No. 819810750 was originally approved on December 10, 1981, for 334,110 square feet of office, 66,000 square feet of retail, and a 231,164 square-foot, 400-room hotel use (in connection with a subsequent Site Plan Amendment, the Site Plan was reclassified as Site Plan No. 819880450).

Various amendments to the Project and Site Plans have been approved over the years. The Project Plan and Site Plan were amended on July 20, 2000 for the conversion of 15,220 square feet of retail space in the office building, into office use, of which 11,711 square feet was to be converted only for an interim period of time unless a subsequent amendment was approved for modifications to the Metro Plaza, in conformance with the guidelines of the then applicable 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan. Accordingly, subsequent amendments to the Project Plan and Site Plan (No. 81988045B) were approved by the Planning Board on November 15, 2001 for upgrades to the Metro Plaza, thereby making permanent the conversion of the entire 15,220 square feet of retail into office use, and an additional 1,500 square feet of retail use (for a restaurant in the interior of the Metro Plaza). Most recently, the Site Plan and Project Plan were amended to allow for the addition of 1,000 square feet of retail/restaurant use to the Hyatt hotel, including a corresponding reduction to the approved building area for the 3 Bethesda Metro Center office building, and associated site improvements (Site Plan No. 81988045D and Project Plan No. 91992004F). In summary, the Property is approved for a total of 632,774 square feet including a 233,664 square foot hotel and a combined total of 399,110 square feet of office and retail use.

Proposal

The Applicant is requesting approval to redevelop the existing three-story "food court" building and a portion of the surrounding Metro Plaza (replacing approximately 40,532 square feet) with a new mixed-use development containing up to a maximum of 500,000 square feet, for a net increase in 459,468 square feet of new development, up to a total of 1,092,242 square feet (or 5.77 FAR). The remaining 15-story portion of the office building and the hotel (including ground floor retail/restaurant uses) will remain unchanged by this Application.

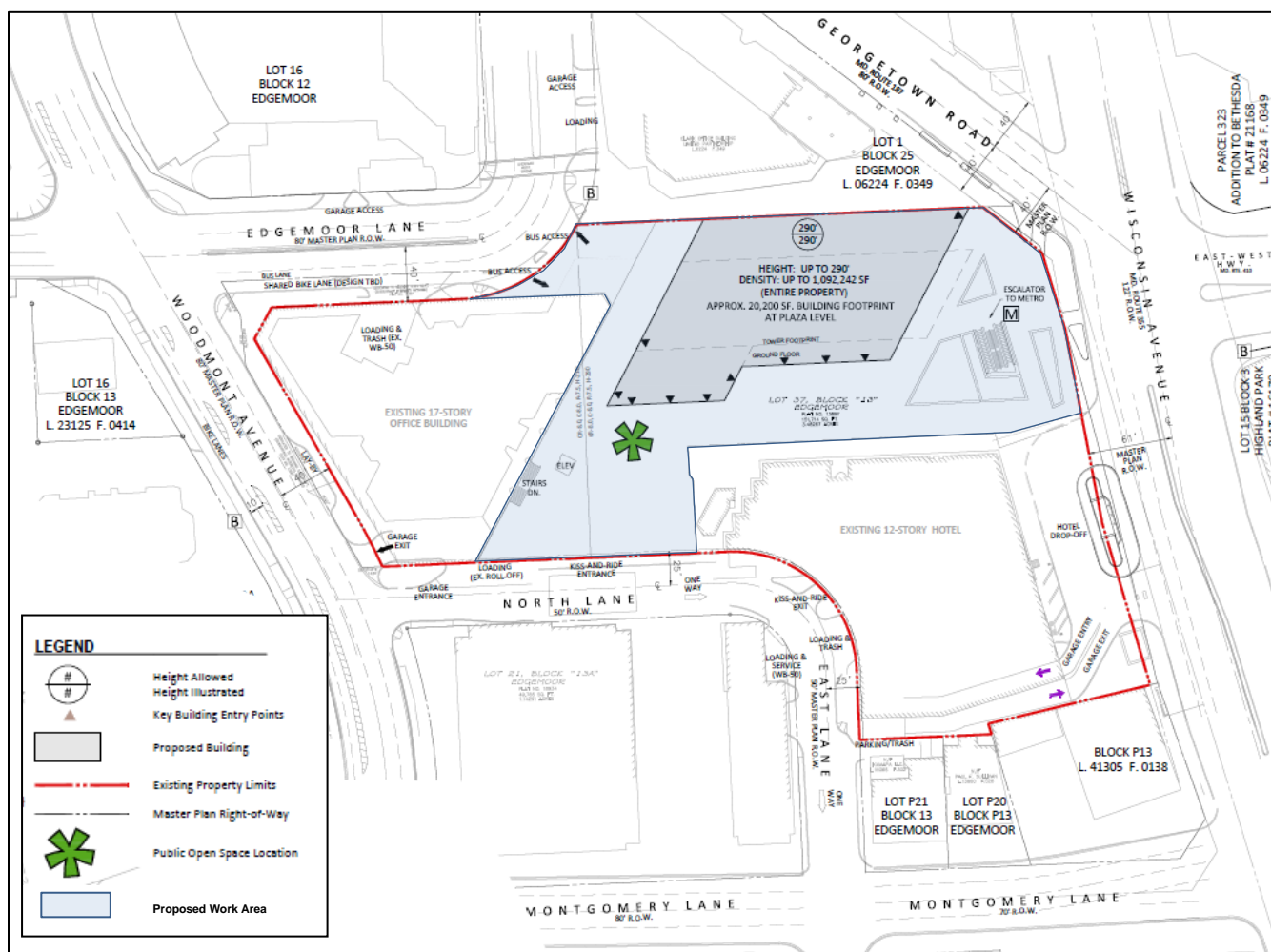


Figure 3-Proposed Sketch Plan

The Applicant is requesting flexibility in order to respond to changes in market demands and is requesting approval of two alternative development options. Both scenarios will adhere to the maximum development caps proposed for the Property.

Residential Development option: This residential and retail option proposes ground floor retail, restaurant and other activating uses with multi-unit residential uses above. The residential component of the Project will include a minimum of 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs); or

Commercial Development option: This option would enable non-residential, instead of residential development, above the ground floor uses.

Both development options will provide substantial public benefits and amenities, including various improvements to the public open space at the Metro Plaza level, improvements to the Metro bus facilities below, and enhanced access to transit. The final allocation of uses will be determined at the time of Preliminary and Site Plan review. The proposal does not include an allocation of density from the Bethesda Overlay Zone and will not be required to make a Park Impact Payment (PIP).

Buildings

This Project is located at the most central, highly visible, transit-oriented site in Bethesda. At the heart of the city, this site demands a very high-quality site and building design that is not only iconic but supports and frames the large public spaces adjacent to it. Although the specific architecture for either residential or commercial development option has not been developed, the location and proposed massing of the building will add to the symbolic center of Bethesda. The new building will be situated at the focal point of East West Highway, Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road. The Applicant believes this Project will deliver a signature building at this important location surrounded by magnificent civic spaces. It will include a vertical marker that symbolizes the greatness of the Bethesda Central Business District, and a most active and highly programmed set of spaces that forms the civic heart to the greater region. The architectural design will energize the pedestrian environment of the surrounding public use spaces through its mix of day and evening uses and will become an iconic urban beacon within the city, up close along adjacent streets and from afar. The massing and verticality of the building will emphasize the urban transit-oriented context of the Project, while façade treatments and architectural elements will provide an appropriate human-scale at the pedestrian level. The proposed building has been strategically designed to help frame a new and significant Metro Plaza/open space adjacent to Wisconsin Avenue, a more retail-oriented Promenade and a multi-use central lawn. This design not only define spaces but preserves views along Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road. It will also become the beacon at the western end of East/West Highway set within the active public spaces. In addition, the existing buildings and the location of the proposed building are specifically designed to frame and support a grand central civic gathering space as expressly called for in the Sector Plan.

The architectural expression of the top of the building for both development options has not been defined in the Sketch Plan submission, however, the top will be highly visible and will be designed in a manner that contributes to the greater Bethesda skyline. Although the two options currently deal with the skyline in distinctly different ways, the top will reflect the prominence of this iconic building in the skyline.

As conditioned, at the time of Preliminary Plan submission, the Applicant will have selected the development option, either the Residential Development option which includes ground floor retail, restaurants and other activating uses with partially terraced multi-unit residential uses above, and a minimum of 15% MPDUs, or the Commercial Development option, which proposes totally non-residential uses above the ground floor with little or no manipulation of the overall building mass. If the Applicant pursues the Commercial Development option, as conditioned, the Applicant must file a sketch plan amendment at the time of Preliminary Plan to address building design and relationship of the base with the open space areas, pedestrian circulation through the site, and design and function of the open space areas. The architectural design of the facade will be developed and expressed more fully in the Site Plan submission to ensure the facade is not exceedingly long, uninterrupted or rigidly uniform, or overly monolithic in mass.

The Project will closely follow the Sector Plan and 2017 Approved and Adopted *Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines* (Design Guidelines), and the open space design and programming has been conceived to address the objectives in the pending Energized Public Space Functional Master Plan.

An important component of the Project is the redesigned Metro Plaza. The Metro Plaza is currently an underutilized series of terraced and isolated spaces that prevent full pedestrian access and use. The vibrancy of the Metro Plaza will be dependent on the presence of additional workers (in the case of the office option) or residents (in the case of the residential option) as well as the redesign of a coherent set of Plazas and green spaces. Additional activating, ground-floor uses, improved circulation, and successful programming that supports the outdoor spaces will also be essential.

Both development scenarios proposed will provide a mix of uses at an appropriate density. Retail and restaurant uses, as well as other activating uses with outdoor seating, are recognized as an effective way to enliven public spaces. As such, both development scenarios will introduce new active, ground-floor uses to help enliven the surrounding spaces. At the pedestrian level, façades will incorporate a significant amount of glass, to provide ample transparency into these active ground floor uses and out to the street and public spaces to fully engage building users with the greater public realm. This design both activates the spaces and promotes greater security through eyes on the street.

The Project calls for massive improvements to the underground bus transfer center which will improve both transit and pedestrian circulation through the site, to the underground Red Line and to the streets above. It will also take full advantage of this prominent location atop the Bethesda Metro Center which will significantly contribute to the mixed-use, transit-oriented district and will further expand non-auto transit use in the region.



Figure 4- Residential Building Conceptual Massing and Precedent Images

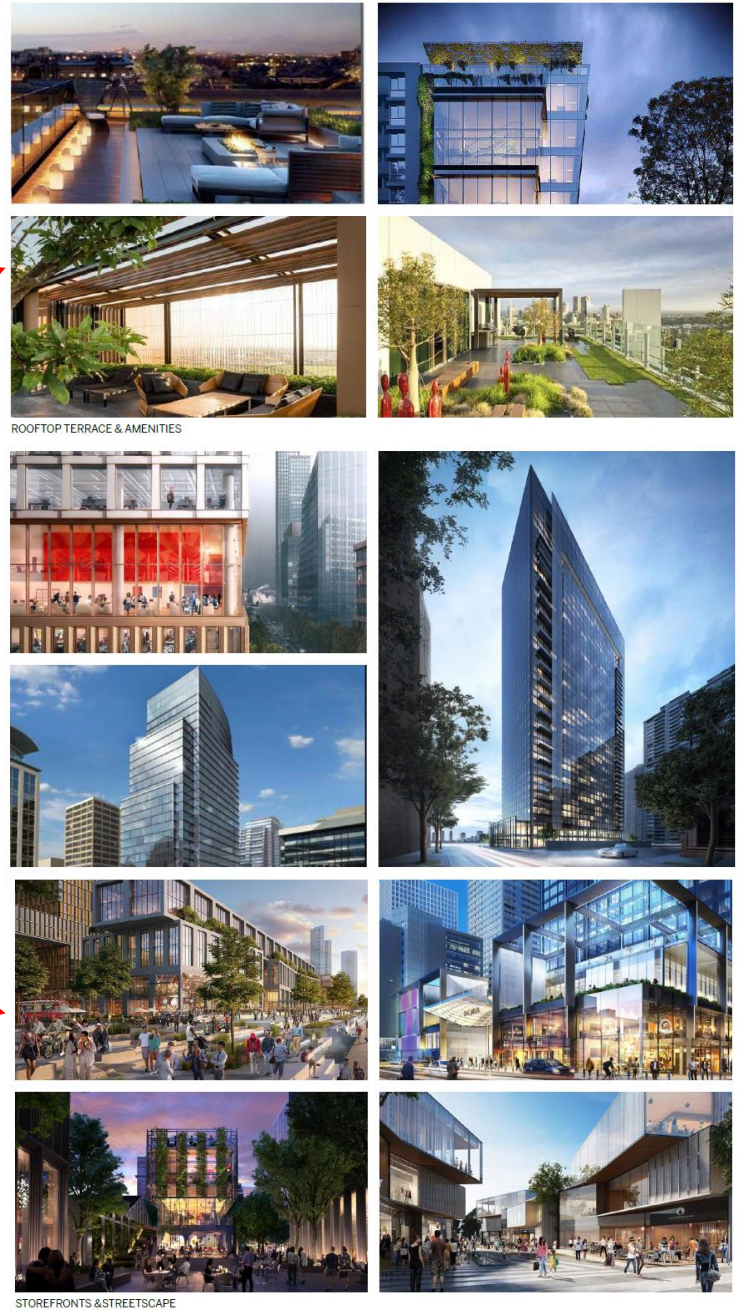
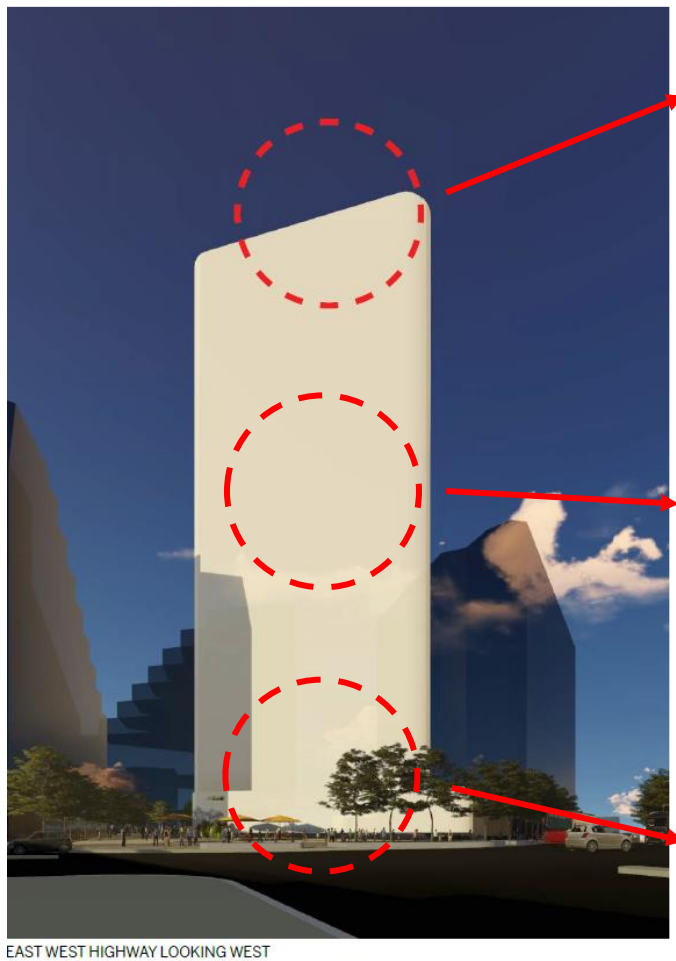


Figure 5- Commercial Building Conceptual Massing and Precedent Images

Open Space

The Zoning Ordinance requires the a minimum 10% of the Site as public open space, or 14,968 square feet (with a Site area of 149,676 square feet). The Applicant proposes an additional 27,032 square feet of public open space in addition to the minimum required, totaling approximately 28% public open space, substantially exceeding the zoning requirement.

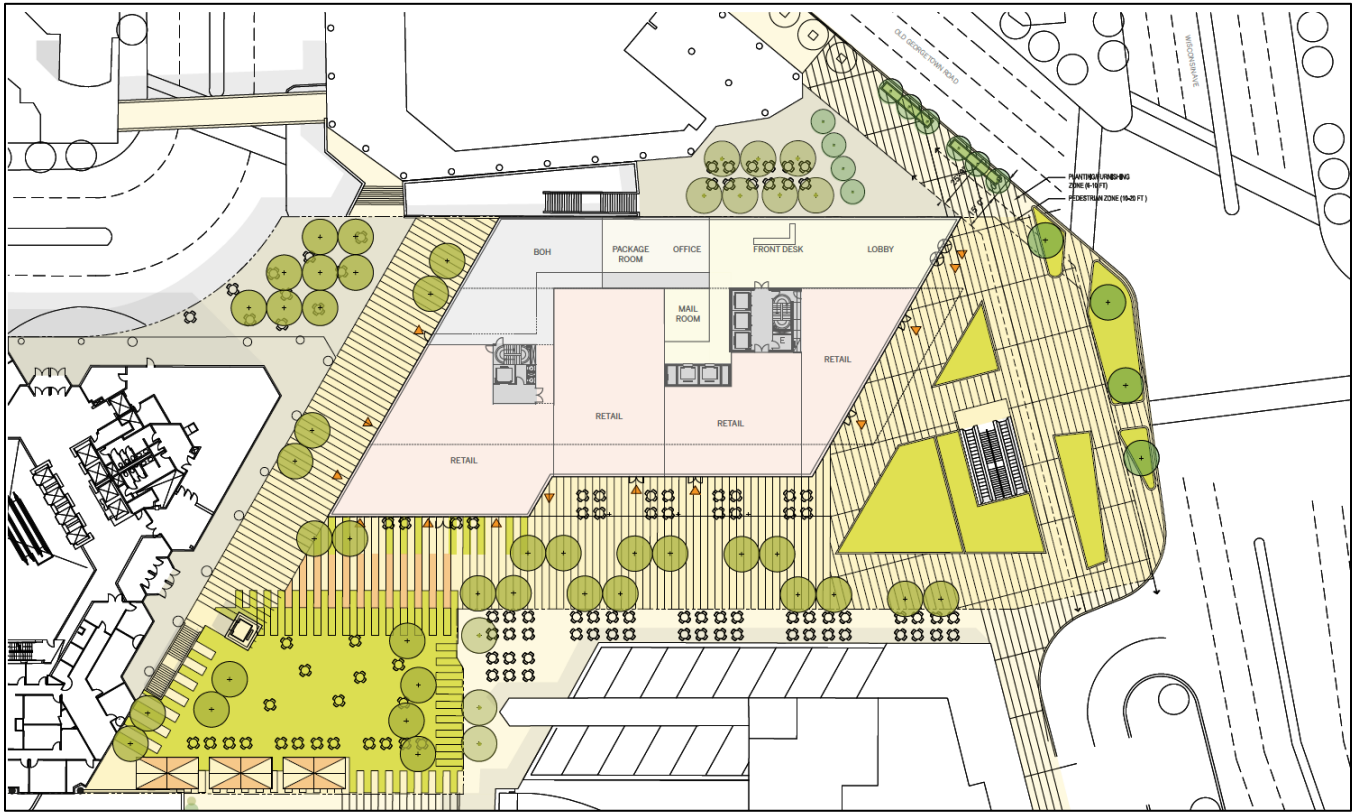


Figure 6-Illustrative Public Open Space-**Residential Development** option

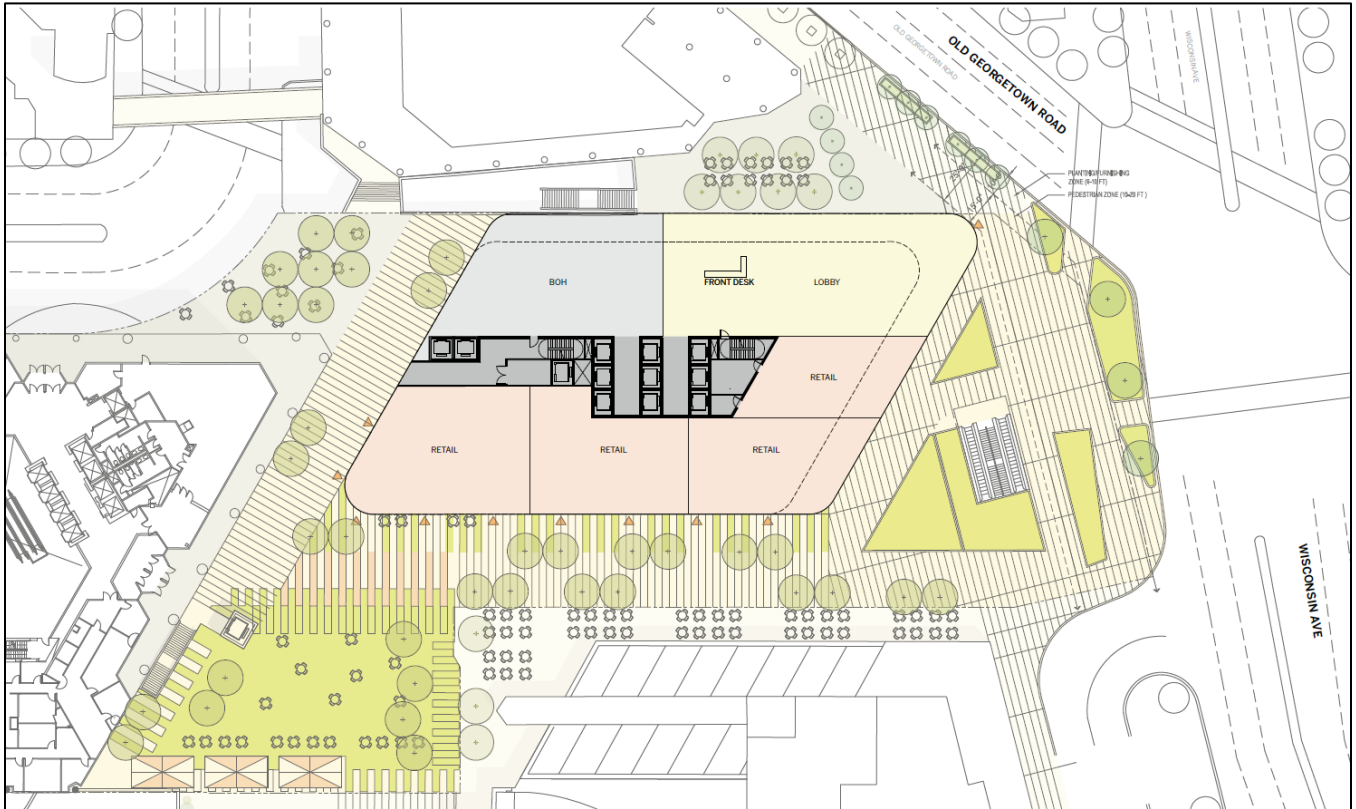


Figure 7-Illustrative Public Open Space-**Commercial Development** option

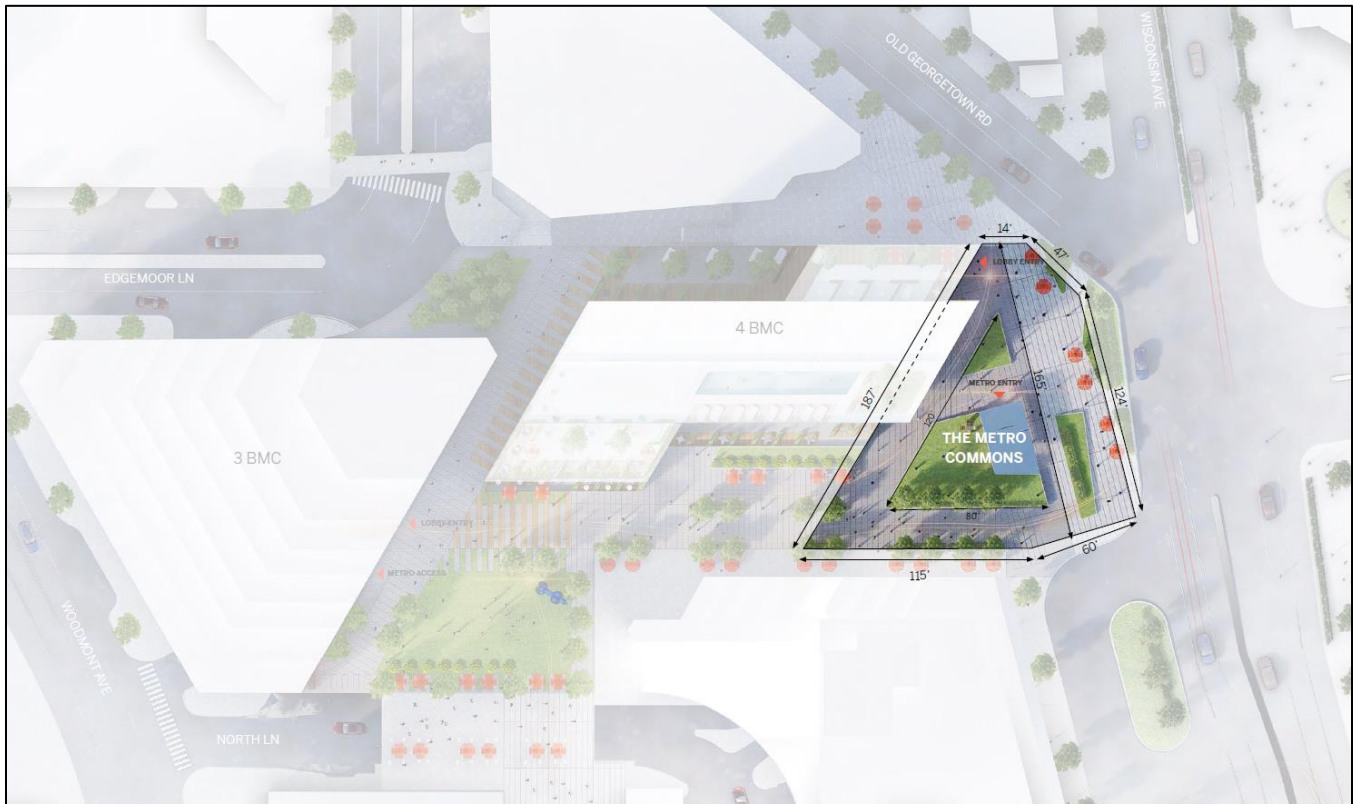
The Project provides a comprehensive redesign of the Metro Plaza. The approximately 37,000 square feet of public open space provided will consist of zones, intended to serve different functions, in order to meet the needs of various users of the site. These spaces are: (1) The Metro Commons (2) The Promenade, and (3) the Lawn. The details and precise location of the open space will be determined at the time of Site Plan.



Figure 8-Conceptual Open Space Zones

Metro Commons

The Metro Commons is located along the Wisconsin Avenue frontage. The Metro Commons will create a new open space area fronting on Wisconsin Avenue that will total nearly 17,000 square feet, which will facilitate a variety of new uses benefitting the public. This space will be designed to provide a welcoming experience to persons entering Bethesda. The Metro Commons is proposed to be designed as an open and flexible space that can accommodate the convergence of a variety of users. Given the heavy foot traffic through this area of the site, this is proposed to be relatively open, with few fixed impediments to pedestrian circulation. The Metro Commons will also provide needed visibility to ensure the success and viability of the proposed retail. Low-height landscaping will be incorporated to ensure clear visual connections to the ground-level retail uses and adjacent open spaces, to encourage visitors and users to meander further into the site. The space will have the ability to accommodate temporary uses including, for example, farmer's markets and pop up retail uses during weekends or holiday seasons, to provide additional activation that are not impacted by traffic. The Applicant is proposing a new and relocated covered escalator that will be integrated into the overall plaza design, to encourage transit users to utilize the open space when accessing the Metro and bus facilities. The Applicant has a robust programming strategy that will be further explored at Site Plan.



A Welcoming, Open and Flexible Plaza
David H. Koch Plaza, NY



Where Multiple Flows of People Converge
Bailey Plaza, Ithaca, NY

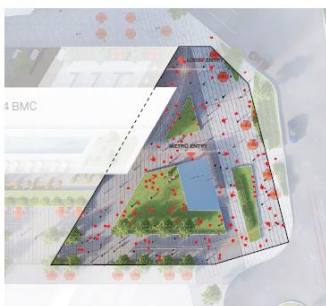


Featuring a New Subway Entrance Seamlessly Integrated with the Landscape
Dilworth Plaza, Philadelphia, PA



And Potential Temporary Uses
Weekend Farmers Market

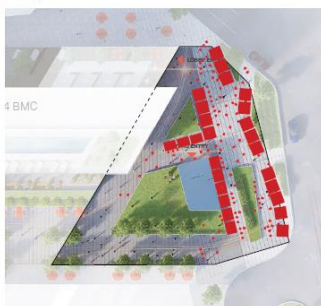
CASUAL GATHERING



The Plaza is designed as an open and flexible space, allowing for informal meeting and relaxing. This diagram shows a low density of **90** people.



MARKET



The central lawn offers flexibility for many configurations and sizes of Farmers' Market tent stalls. This layout shows 26 tents at 12' x 12'.



Figure 9-The Metro Commons-Conceptual Design and Precedent Images

The Promenade

The Promenade connects the Metro Commons to the interior Lawn. The proposed design of the promenade envisions a unified public space that works both for pedestrians passing through and as a destination in itself. The Promenade will be appropriately sized to provide ample room for pedestrian circulation, while also providing a sense of enclosure to create a comfortable outdoor space.

The Promenade is proposed to be lined by active ground floor uses. The Hyatt Hotel is currently in the process of adding an additional 1,000 square feet to the ground floor retail/restaurant uses to complement its existing retail uses, which will line the south side of the Promenade and includes outdoor dining and a new coffee shop. Both development options for the Project include active, ground floor uses that will line the north side of the Promenade and complement the restaurants and retail on the south side. Additionally, outdoor seating is contemplated as part of any restaurant uses on the ground floor space.

The Promenade design will incorporate lighting, paving, seating, and landscaping that will be designed as part of an integrated experience. These design elements will create a dynamic experience that will draw visitors into the site, and encourage patrons to either sit and relax, or shop and dine.

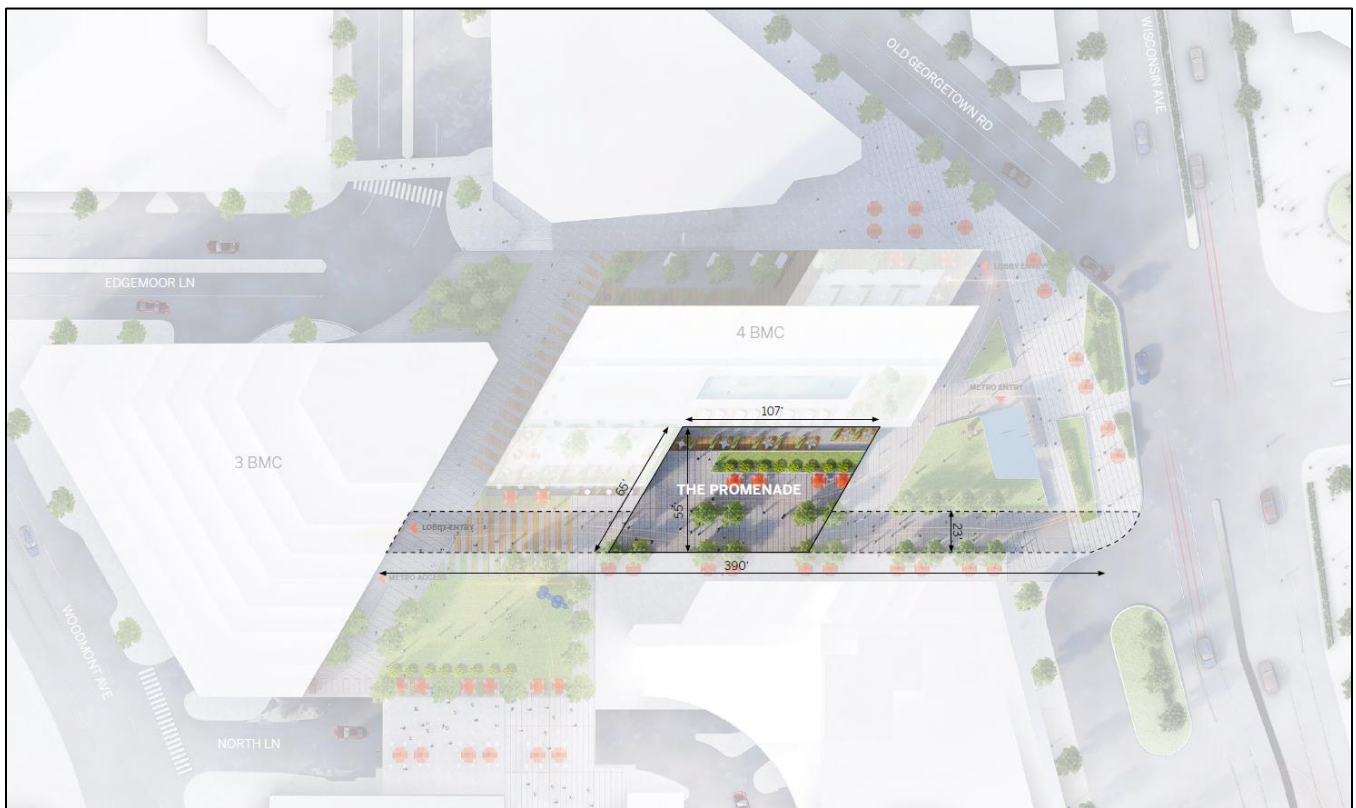


Figure 10-The Promenade-Conceptual Design and Precedent Images



A Well Proportioned Promenade
Bethesda Row, Bethesda MD (55')



Featuring Active, Visible and Accessible Ground-floor Uses

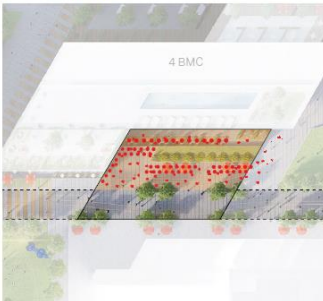


Outdoor Seating and Landscaped Terraces



A Clear, Intuitive Connection to Inner-block Spaces
The Avenue, Washington D.C.

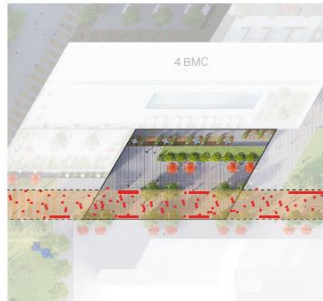
RETAIL EXPERIENCE



The Promenade can be catered to a multitude of engaging ground floor uses. Shown are a multiple intimate dining areas that belong the retail activity.



OUTDOOR SEATING



Designed to connect to retail space within 4BMC, the Promenade offers supplemental outdoor seating areas.

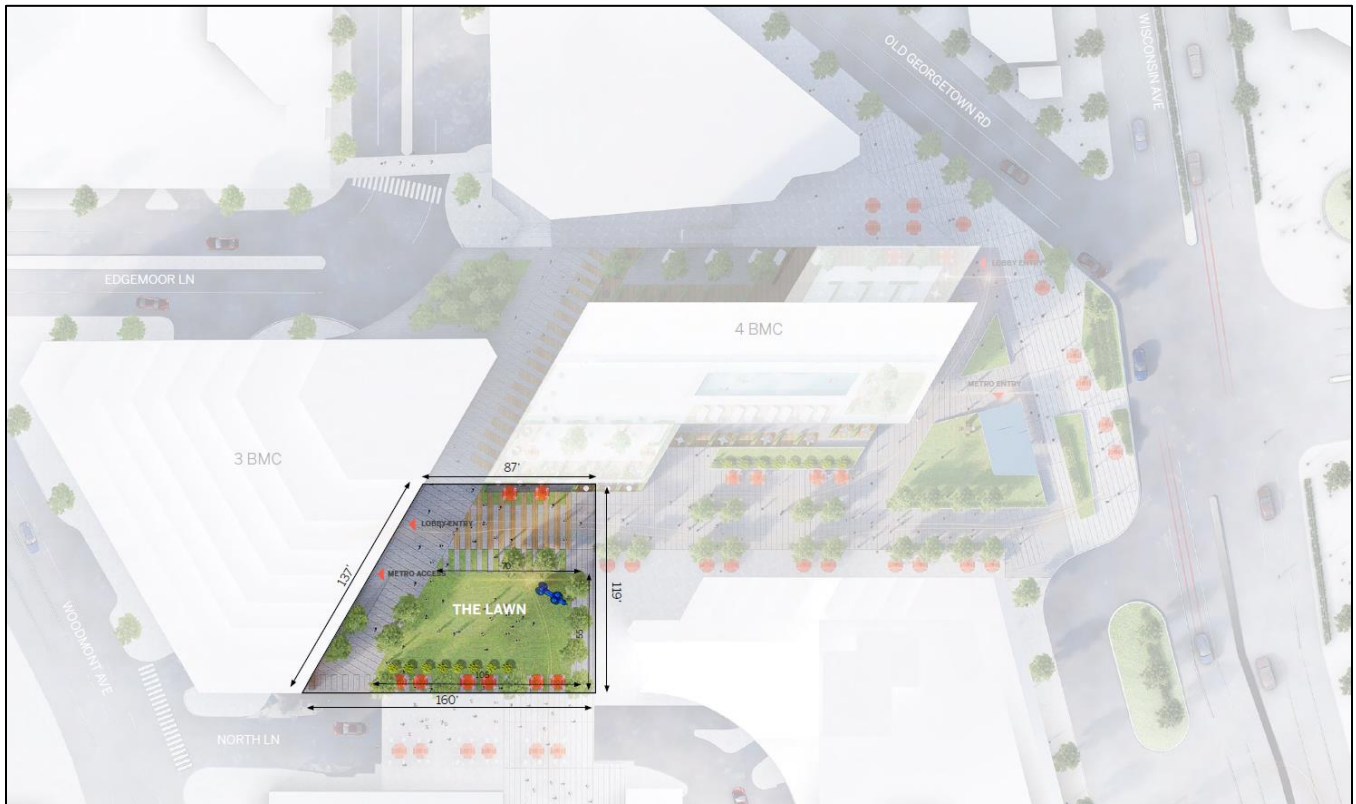


Figure 11-The Promenade- Precedent Images

The Lawn

This area is envisioned as a flexible, inviting green space. The proposed location will allow for the creation of an area for all of Bethesda, buffered from the noise and traffic of the surrounding streets by the proposed building. The Applicant's intention is to transform the lawn into a destination. This flexible space will be programmed with a variety of activities and events. Moveable seating is proposed to encourage visitors to interact within the space, creating a more flexible and dynamic space. It is also currently anticipated that retail kiosks can be incorporated around the periphery of the Lawn to further activate this public space.

A portion of this open space area serves as the front door to both the existing Newlands Building and 3 Bethesda Metro Center. This Project will improve the functionality of that open space by removing steps, barriers and different levels so that it can be programmed for any number of events, and usable green space will be added to make it more inviting. The Lawn is designed to be completely programmable for activities that require less noise and more security from automobile traffic such as family movies on the lawn, concerts, social gatherings and other events.



A Flexible Space Programed with Temporary Events and Installations
Outdoor Fitness Programs



Featuring Art Installations to Create Visual Interest and Draw Visitors
Janet Echelman sculpture

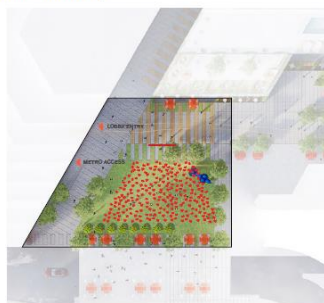


Activated with Retail Kiosks
Industry City, Brooklyn



Transforming the Lawn into a Destination
The Piazza at Schmidt's, Philadelphia PA

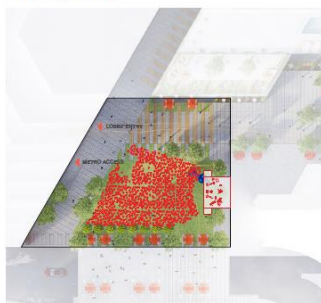
CASUAL EVENT



During a less dense, more casual event, variety in planting prevents the Lawn from feeling empty. This diagram shows a crowd of **280** people at 9 square feet per person.



SMALL CONCERT



The Lawn will be engineered to withstand a small stage concert. This diagram shows a crowd of **1,000** people at 5 square feet per person.



Figure 12-The Lawn-Conceptual Design and Precedent Images

The Metro Commons open area creates an inviting entry to the wide Promenade and the Lawn area which, together, when included with the central open area provided by the Newlands Building, offer the public nearly an acre of connected public use space.

The Applicant has engaged its affiliate, "Arts Brookfield", to bring unique expertise to the programming of the Bethesda Metro open space, including both the Metro Commons along Wisconsin Avenue and the Lawn. The Applicant has engaged Streetsense, a local expert on retail to help design the retail promenade and other portions of the plaza. The new ground floor retail will interact with the Daily Grill restaurant/patio on the plaza and the new Starbucks in the Hyatt Hotel. While this new retail frontage on the southern side of the plaza demonstrates the possibility of a vibrant retail community, it is both the open space programming and retail activity that together will add new life into the open space at Metro Center.

Environment

Green Area Coverage

The Bethesda Downtown Plan includes recommendations to achieve the urban green goals within the Sector Plan boundary. An important recommendation to this effect is the onsite 35% green area coverage minimum. The green cover may include singularly or a combination of intensive green roof (6 inches or deeper) or tree canopy cover. Furthermore, the Sector Plan's specify soil volume minimums (of 600 cubic feet per tree) associated with the tree plantings to help insure the desired canopy will be achieved.

However, since only a portion of the Subject Property is proposed for redevelopment (rather than the entire 149,676 sf or 3.4-acre site) it is anticipated that the Applicant will not achieve the overall 35% minimum coverage for the Property. The Property was developed long before the current standards were in place and has relatively little canopy/green coverage. The currently submitted Green Cover plan demonstrates a 17.25% overall green cover and a 38.19% cover for the limit of work area. To help compensate for the Subject Property remaining short of the Sector Plans' green cover minimum, and to provide a reasonable and measurable and goal, Staff recommends a condition of approval for the Applicant to provide an additional 10% of the work site area in green cover (or 48.19%). Staff notes that the version submitted for the Planning Board review does not reflect the revised layout which was recently presented to the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) on June 24, 2018. The more recent plans include additional greenspace with expanded opportunities for credit toward the green cover requirements. Furthermore, the green roof area currently shown on the proposed building is minimal and could readily be expanded to further the goals of the Sector Plan regarding green cover.

Noise

The project proposes residential units to be built adjacent to arterial roadways and would therefore be subject to a noise analysis needed at time of Preliminary Plan submission. However, a waiver may be submitted per Section 2.2.2 of the 1983 Noise Guidelines.

Forest Conservation

Since the approval of the recent amendments to the Forest Conservation Law, all properties subject to a sketch plan filed on or after November 14, 2017 must have obtained approval of a Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) or forest conservation exemption prior to the Planning Board acting on the sketch plan. The NRI/FSD is a document which maps the existing man-made and natural features associated with a project boundary and includes a study area which is typically 100 feet beyond the subject property. The NRI/FSD 420182430 was approved for this project on June 27, 2018. A Forest Conservation Plan will be submitted as part of the future Preliminary/Site Plan submissions. Additionally, a Tree Save Plan may be required based on the final locations of the LOD, utility connections etc. relative to affected trees.

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 Stormwater Management Concept Plan should also address the Sector Plan recommendations regarding stormwater management, including green roofs, underground storage, bioretention and tree planting (Sector Plan, p. 59).

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.

No changes to the existing vehicular access points are proposed with the subject application. Existing vehicular access operates in the following manner (Figure 13):

- Edgemoor Lane operates as a two-way median-divided roadway along the site frontage. Public buses enter the Bethesda Metrorail station via Edgemoor Lane at the northwest corner of the site with a loading/ service access point located midway between the bus entrance and Woodmont Avenue.
- Woodmont Avenue operates as a one-way (southbound) roadway along the site frontage. A single point of garage ingress/ egress exists at the southwest corner of the site, adjacent to the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and North lane. Woodmont Avenue and North Lane each have an ingress/ egress lane at this intersection.
- North Lane and East Lane operate as one-way (eastbound/ southbound) service streets along the site's southern frontage. In addition to the garage access at the Woodmont Avenue/ North Lane intersection described above, North Lane and East Lane provide access to the Metrorail station kiss & ride and short term parking, and loading.
- Wisconsin Avenue operates as a six-lane median divided roadway along the site frontage. Site access along this roadway is limited to a single point of garage access (right-in/right-out) and a forecourt for the hotel.
- Old Georgetown Road operates as a one-way (northbound) roadway along the site frontage. No vehicular access is permitted along this roadway.

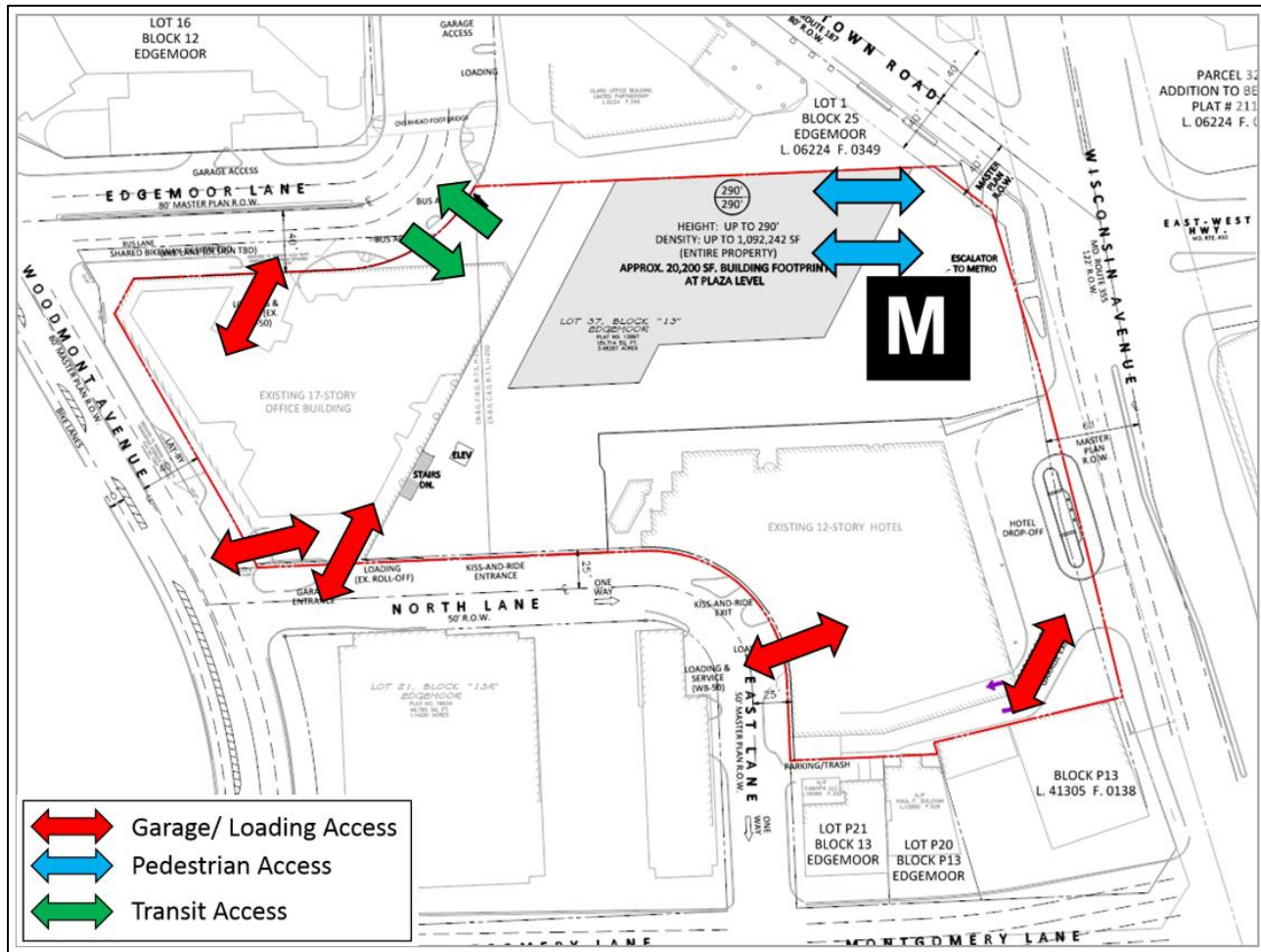


Figure 13-Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

Transit Connectivity

The immediate area is well served by transit that includes the Red Line Bethesda Metrorail Station (located directly beneath the site), Metrobus, RideOn, the Bethesda Circulator and future Purple Line.

Master Plan Roadways and Pedestrian/Bikeway Facilities

The 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* recommends the following along property frontages:

1. Edgemoor Lane along the northern site frontage, as a Business District Street with a minimum right-of-way width of 80 feet and two-way separated bicycle lanes (LB-8) along the eastbound (property frontage) side of the street.
2. Woodmont Avenue along the western site frontage, as an arterial roadway with a minimum right-of-way width of 80 feet and separated bicycle lanes (CT-4) along the southbound (opposite frontage) side of the street.
3. North Lane along the southern site frontage, as a Business District Street with a minimum right-of-way width of 50 feet.
4. East Lane along the southern site frontage, as a Business District Street with a minimum right-of-way width of 50 feet.
5. Wisconsin Avenue along the eastern site frontage, as a major highway (M-6) with a minimum right-of-way width of 80 feet.

6. Old Georgetown Road along the northeastern site frontage, as a major highway (M-4) with a minimum right-of-way width of 80 feet and separated bicycle lanes (CT-8). Although a specific design for the Old Georgetown Road separated bike lanes has not yet been determined, the current concept envisions this bicycle facility on the north side of Old Georgetown Road. Staff believes the north side of the roadway will better coordinate with plans for the East-West Highway (MD 410) separated bikeway which are also envisioned on the north side.

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. Under either the Residential Development option or the Commercial Development option, 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 (APF)

Of the two development options, the Commercial Development option is estimated to generate up to 423 morning peak-hour trips and 387 evening peak-hour trips. If the Applicant pursues the Residential Development option, the project will have a lower trip generation impact. Since the Project will generate more than 50 net new person trips, the Applicant must submit a transportation impact study in accordance with the Local Area Transportation Review requirement at the time of Preliminary Plan. If the Residential Development option is pursued, the APF review will need to evaluate impacts to school capacity.

Community Outreach

The Applicant held a pre-submittal public meeting at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center on October 11, 2017. Seventeen people attended the meeting and raised questions/concerns including, but not limited to the public open space and activation of the space and improving the bus bay/Metro (Attachment A). The Applicant has complied with all submittal and noticing requirements.

The Applicant presented the Sketch Plan to the Bethesda Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) on February 2, 2018. At the meeting there was discussion regarding the public open space, improvements to the bus bay/Metro, activating the ground floor, public art (Attachment B).

Staff has received much correspondence from the community about the relationship between the sizes and relative locations of the building and public open space on the site, particularly with regard to Wisconsin Avenue (Attachment C). While the majority cast this concern in terms of opposition, and a smaller but substantial portion as support, this is a significant urban design question that has been raised by staff and the DAP, and that the Applicant must answer as the design continues to develop. The 2017 Sector Plan is clear in its anticipation of a new building on this site; however, the function and operation of open space was also a high priority. The Applicant presented the updated design to the DAP and received comments and recommendations on the building form as it relates to the three open spaces intended to link Wisconsin Avenue to the bus bays, metro entrance and Edgemoor Lane. As the Applicant develops the design further, they will continue to coordinate with the community, staff, and the DAP to achieve an attractive, welcoming, and viable solution.

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 following Data Table:

Sketch Plan Data Table			
Section 59.4	Development Standard	Permitted/ Required	Proposed
	Gross Tract Area per Zone CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H 210 CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H 290 Total Gross Tract Area	n/a	58,830 sf (1.35 ac) 130,453 sf (2.99 ac) 189,283 sf (4.34 ac)
	Prior Dedication Additional Dedication Net Lot Area	n/a n/a n/a	37,569 sf (0.86 ac) 2,038 sf (0.05 ac) 149,676 sf (3.44 ac)
	Commercial Development option Non-Residential Other (Hotel to remain) Total Density	1,514,264 sf (8.0 FAR) 1,514,264 sf (8.0 FAR)	858,578 sf (4.53 FAR) 233,644 sf (1.23 FAR) 1,092,242 sf (5.77 FAR)
	Residential Development option Non-Residential Residential Other (Hotel to remain) Total Density	1,514,264 sf (8.0 FAR) 1,419,622 sf (7.5 FAR) 1,514,264 sf (8.0 FAR)	393,578 sf (2.07 FAR) 465,000 sf (2.45 FAR) 233,664 sf (1.23 FAR) 1,092,242 sf (5.77 FAR)
	Building Height CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H 210 CR 8.0 C 8.0 R 7.5 H 290	210 feet 290 feet	NO CHANGE 290 feet
	Public Open Space (min)	10%/14,968 sq. ft.	28%/42,000 sq. ft. ¹

¹Final square footage to be determined at the time of Site Plan.

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 final development option.

At the time of Preliminary Plan submission, the Applicant will have selected the development option, either the Residential Development option which includes ground floor retail, restaurant and other activating uses with multi-unit residential uses above, and a minimum of 15% MPDUs or the Commercial Development option, which proposes non-residential, instead of residential development, above the ground floor uses. If the Applicant pursues the Commercial Development option, as conditioned, the Applicant must file a sketch

plan amendment at the time of Preliminary Plan, to address building design and relationship of the base with the open space areas, pedestrian circulation through the site, and design and function of the open space areas. 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*. Specifically, this Plan builds on the past successes of Downtown Bethesda to create a truly sustainable downtown by focusing on components that will bolster the elements most in need of enhancement. The recommendations increase:

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 Application is addressing and incorporating three of the four overarching goals. The project is providing a comprehensive redesign of the Metro Plaza. The approximately 42,000 square feet of public open space provided will consist of zones, intended to serve different functions, in order to meet the needs of various users of the site; environmental innovation through energy efficiency, innovative stormwater management solutions, improved pedestrian and bicycle opportunities around the site and through the site, in addition to improvements to the Metro bus facilities below and enhanced access to transit; and through economic competitiveness by incorporating new commercial development in downtown Bethesda in both development options. The proposed building located above the Metro Station, with access to public amenities and proposing a complete redesign of the Metro Plaza, will attract business opportunities in and around the Bethesda area. If the Residential Development option is selected, this Application will meet all four of the overarching goals by providing a mix of housing options, including 15% MPDUs.

The Property is designated as site 98 and 99 on page 99 and 101 of the Plan. The Property is in the "Wisconsin Avenue Corridor District", which is the main artery through the center of downtown Bethesda. With the existing Bethesda Metrorail Station, future Purple Line and bus rapid transit (BRT) options, Wisconsin Avenue is a critical focus area for improved access, mobility and pedestrian safety. The corridor is envisioned as a symbolic downtown center that reflects the character of adjacent neighborhoods and overall identity of Bethesda through innovative building designs and active public spaces. The area's retail potential is compromised by its location on either side of Wisconsin Avenue. As a major commuter arterial, this street has heavy traffic volumes that eliminate the potential for "cross shopping" and a lack of visibility for retail establishments. Specifically, the Project addresses the following goals as outlined in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor section of the Plan:

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

The Project provides an important opportunity for infill development of an underdeveloped commercial site, as recommended by the Sector Plan, with a mixed-use, transit-oriented Project. The Project will provide a variety of uses (including restaurant, retail/service, and residential or office) directly on top of the Bethesda Metro Station and bus facility, and within walking distance from the proposed Bethesda Purple Line Station, and other transit options (including the Bethesda Circulator).

- *Provide new civic gathering spaces.*

The Project will provide a comprehensive redesign of the Metro Plaza with new public open space areas intended to serve different functions to meet the needs of various users of the site. Public open spaces include plazas, a central lawn area for performances, retail promenade, gallery and active areas. The Project will also provide several improvements to enhance access to and from the Metro/bus facilities, from the Metro Plaza and surrounding community including a new covered escalator that will provide a direct pedestrian connection between the Metro Plaza and transit facilities below, improvements to the existing staircase near the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and North Lane, and a new elevator at this location. These improvements are intended to enhance the community's experience when accessing the Metro Station and bus facilities and are designed to encourage use of the Metro Plaza above.

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

The Sector Plan recommended rezoning this Site to increase the commercial density and height to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions. The Applicant is requesting flexibility in order to respond to changes in market demands and is requesting approval of two alternative development options. Both scenarios will adhere to the maximum development caps proposed for the Property. Although the Commercial Development option, if selected, would not provide mixed-income/affordable housing, both development options will provide substantial public benefits and amenities, including various improvements to the public open space at the Metro Plaza level, improvements to the Metro bus facilities below, and enhanced access to transit. The final allocation of uses will be determined at the time of Preliminary and Site Plan review. If the Project is developed with residential and retail uses, the Project will provide residential units on top of the metro station in an area dominated by commercial and office uses. The Project would provide much needed affordable housing in the form of additional MPDUs. This proposed influx of MPDUs will help to further one of the primary goals of the Sector Plan and Bethesda Overlay Zone thereby ensuring that affordable housing opportunities exist in transit-oriented locations.

- *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 will provide infill redevelopment within the highest intensity center in downtown Bethesda between adjacent commercial/office and hotel development. If the project is developed as residential it will provide a more around-the-clock activity contributing to a more vibrant mixed-use identity for the block. The combination of multi-family dwelling units, ground floor retail uses,

and amenities proposed for the block will create a more pedestrian friendly, active and functional metro plaza space.

- *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, planters and green area at the plaza level are proposed to maximize the Property's overall green cover.

- *Improve and enhance underutilized privately owned public use spaces.*

The Project will greatly improve and enhance downtown Bethesda's central civic space and premier public transit facility in the Metro station by comprehensively redesigning the Metro Plaza and upgrading various transit functions below with improved circulation and functionality, added public amenities and by providing additional commercial, retail and/or residential uses that will activate and enliven the area around-the-clock and ensure a more successful public realm.

Both of the Project's proposed development options are in general conformance with the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* and will provide a mix of uses at an appropriate density.

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

The Project provides an important opportunity for infill development of an underdeveloped commercial site, as recommended by the Sector Plan, with a mixed-use, transit-oriented Project. The Project proposes a variety of uses (including restaurant, retail/service, and residential or office) within walking distance of the Bethesda Metro Station, various bus routes, the proposed Bethesda Purple Line Station, and other transit options.

- 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.*

Both development options provide significant public benefits and amenities, including various improvements to Metro bus facilities and Metro Plaza, as well as transit access improvements. Additionally, the location of the Project, atop the Metro Station and bus area, will facilitate the use of multiple modes of transportation to access to the Property. The Residential Development option proposing market-rate residential units in a variety of unit types as well as 15% MPDUs, offering housing opportunities for a range of incomes proximate to the numerous transit options of downtown Bethesda. Although housing would not be provided in the Commercial Development option, the Subject Property has nearby existing and proposed high-rise multi-family buildings. Existing mobility options include improved streetscapes for pedestrians in and around the Subject Property and along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor, as well as planned bike lanes on three frontages of the Property. Below-grade parking is proposed for both development options, taking advantage of the existing, below-grade parking garage. Public amenities including bike share, public open space, streetscape improvements are integral to the design and operation of the site. The Project facilitates all modes of transit – pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular – in close proximity to the Metro and bus service by

improving the streetscape along its frontages. 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.*

Both development options will provide a desirable mix of uses, at an appropriate density, at this prominent location. The proposed building height will highlight the Project's important location as a gateway to the Bethesda Metro Station. The surrounding buildings will step down in height and density as they approach the edges, to provide an appropriate transition to the existing residential areas on the edges/outside of the Plan boundary.

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

The Sector Plan identified several distinct districts within Downtown Bethesda to guide development compatibility. The Subject Property is within the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor District, which is envisioned as a symbolic downtown center that reflects the character of adjacent neighborhoods and overall identity of Bethesda through innovative building designs and active public spaces. As proposed, the Project proposes two development options – one proposing a substantial amount of new residential development and the other proposing additional office use. Given the existing mix-of uses within the Bethesda CBD, both development options will facilitate an appropriate mix of employment and/or housing opportunities to facilitate the creation of a sustainable downtown.

- 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. Final determination of public benefit points will be determined at the time of 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*.

- 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;*

This Project is located at the most central site in Bethesda. The proposed building height will highlight the Redevelopment Area's important location as a gateway to the Bethesda Metro Station. Although the specific architecture for either development option has not been developed, the location and proposed massing of the building will add to the symbolic center of Bethesda. The building has been situated at the focal point from East West Highway, with visibility along Wisconsin Avenue as well. The Applicant believes this Project will deliver a signature building at this important location. It will include a vertical marker that symbolizes the greatness of the Bethesda Central Business District, and a most active and highly programmed set of spaces that forms the civic heart to the greater region. The architectural design of the Project will both

enhance the pedestrian environment and surrounding public use space and emphasize the urban nature of the Project. The massing and verticality of the building will emphasize the urban context of the Project, while façade treatments and architectural elements will provide an appropriate human-scale at the pedestrian level. The proposed building has been strategically designed to help frame the Metro Plaza, in order to provide a well-defined space, while simultaneously preserving views of Wisconsin Avenue and Old Georgetown Road to improve visibility and connections to the street. In addition, the location of the existing buildings and the proposed building are specifically designed to surround a central civic gathering space as expressly called for in the Sector Plan. The proposed building will allow for light and air for the open space. In addition, as conditioned, the Applicant will provide a shadow study at the time of Site Plan submission.

As conditioned, at the time of Preliminary Plan submission, the Applicant will have selected the development option: either the Residential Development option which includes ground floor retail, restaurants and other activating uses with partially terraced multi-unit residential uses above, and a minimum of 15% MPDUs; or the Commercial Development option, which proposes totally non-residential uses above the ground floor with little or no manipulation of the overall building mass. If the Applicant pursues the Commercial Development option, as conditioned, the Applicant must file a sketch plan amendment at the time of Preliminary Plan to address building design and relationship of the base with the open space areas, pedestrian circulation through the site, and design and function of the open space areas. The architectural design of the facade will be developed and expressed more fully in the Site Plan submission to ensure the facade is not exceedingly long, uninterrupted or rigidly uniform, or overly monolithic in mass.

The Project adheres to the height and density recommendations contained in the Sector Plan. The conceptual building massing is compatible in height and scale with the existing and pending nearby development in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor District.

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 proposes to improve the pedestrian circulation in Downtown Bethesda by providing active, through-block connections to facilitate alternative means of access to transit and surrounding properties within the CBD. The building has been located and oriented to help define and activate the street and these passageways. Activated ground floor space, including retail and restaurant use, and ample transparency on the ground level will further enhance the pedestrian environment. An important component of the Project is the redesigned Metro Plaza. The Metro Plaza is currently an underutilized series of terraced and isolated spaces that prevent full pedestrian access and use. The vibrancy of the Metro Plaza will be dependent on the presence of additional workers (in the case of the office option) or residents (in the case of the residential option) as well as the redesign of a coherent set of Plazas and green spaces. Additional activating, ground-floor uses, improved circulation, and successful programming that supports the outdoor spaces will be essential.

The Project proposes transit access improvements that will substantially improve a rider's experience when accessing the Metro Station and bus facilities and thus, encourage transit ridership. Long-term bicycle racks or lockers will be provided within the building or garage, and short-term spaces will be provided along the Property's frontage or within the public Metro Plaza (with final location to be determined at time of Site Plan) to facilitate bicyclist access to the site. The Project utilizes the existing parking garage, which will continue to remain adequate to accommodate all users of the Property. Access to parking and loading will utilize existing driveways and continue to be safe, adequate and efficient.

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 and the Public Benefit Points established with the Bethesda Overlay Zone in Section 59.4.9.2.C.4, 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, 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.

For the proposed development, the Zoning Ordinance requires 100 points in four categories. Although at the time of Sketch Plan review only the categories need be approved, the following table 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.

Public Benefits Calculations		
Public Benefit	Incentive Density Points	
	Max Allowed	Requested
59.4.7.3.A: Major Public Facility	70	30
59.4.7.3.C: Connectivity and Mobility		
Minimum Parking¹	20	9.21
59.4.7.3.E: Quality of Building and Site Design		
Exceptional Design¹	30	10
Public Open Space¹	30	18.06
Structured Parking	20	20
59.4.7.3.F: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment		
BLTs	30	8.69
Energy Conservation and Generation¹	25	15
TOTAL		110.96

¹Denotes Sector Plan priority

Major Public Facility

Minimum Parking: The Project proposes significant transit access improvements and enhancements to the Metro bus bay area. These modifications will substantially improve users experience when accessing the Metro and thus, encourage additional transit ridership. Based on the square footage associated with the construction of these improvements, the Applicant is seeking 30 points in this category. Final determination will be made at Site Plan and Staff supports the Applicant's request at this time.

Connectivity and Mobility

Minimum Parking: The Applicant requests 9.21 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. Final determination will be made at Site Plan and Staff supports the Applicant's request.

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. The Project is subject to the Design Advisory Panel review, which will award points based on the quality of the design. The Applicant asserts that the Project provides innovative solutions in response to the immediate context; creates a sense of place and serves as a landmark; enhances the public realm in a distinct and original manner; introduces materials, forms, or building methods unique to the immediate vicinity or applied in a unique way; and integrates low-impact development methods into the overall design of the site and building, beyond green building or site requirements. The Sketch Plan is intended to be conceptual in nature with an emphasis on building densities, massing, and heights, and because this category is a priority in the Sector Plan. Based on the conceptual materials submitted with the Application, Staff supports the Applicant's request at this time.

The Design Advisory Panel reviewed the project on April 25, 2018 and requested the project return the panel before going to the Planning Board, with the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that there are clear links between the plaza and the destinations around it, particularly to the residential areas west of Woodmont Avenue where the connection is poor.
2. Work with Chevy Chase Land Company to incorporate their space into the design.
3. Show more drawings to show the plan of bus bay and perspectives of the views coming from that level.
4. Do predictive heat mapping to see where pedestrians go in the space.
5. Consider raising half of the building at least 30 feet in the air. Anchor the promenade and increase visibility from Wisconsin and visibility to the back space similar to 7359 Wisconsin, as long as the space is a major gathering space and not just a walkway.
6. Provide 3d models and physical models if possible. Create a very clear presentation about the massing. See 7607 Old Georgetown Road's submission to the Design Advisory Panel as an example.
7. Explore making the central lawn area more about connecting from Woodmont and the bus bay. Could possibly be a glassed in pavilion so that it is a destination in winter and summer. Maybe more secondary to the primary building.
8. Green up the entry plaza, make it greener like the central plaza. Make a central glassy element at the escalator in the middle of the lawn. If they need ventilation do it at the back where the central lawn is.

The Project returned to the Design Advisory Panel on June 27, 2018. The Panel supported the project, specifically the Residential Development option, and recommended the following during their second meeting to discuss this project on June 27, 2018:

1. The preferred massing is the residential option.
2. Continue to develop all of the access points to the plaza level including from the bus bay below, the north stair and the connections to the west and south.
3. Continue to emphasize the activation of the ground floor and programming the open space because these are critical elements.
4. Provide a physical model at site plan if possible to allow the panel to see the relationships to the open space and between buildings.
5. Public Benefit Points: The project is on track to achieve the minimum 10 Exceptional Design points required in the Bethesda Overlay Zone.
6. Straw vote: 3 support with conditions to meet the panel recommendations above.

Understanding that points are not awarded at Sketch Plan, the DAP supported the design concept and believed the Applicant could achieve the minimum exceptional design points at Site Plan, with a significant focus on the public space and interaction with the proposed building design. The expectation was for the refined design to come back to the DAP prior to the submittal of the Site Plan. Additional context and discussion for the DAP's recommendations are included in the attached April 25, 2018, and June 27, 2018, DAP meeting summaries (Attachment D). In addition, the Applicant's June 27, 2018 DAP submission, Applicant's June 27, 2018 DAP presentation, and community correspondence for the June 27, 2018 DAP meeting are included as attachments to this staff report (Attachments E-G).

Open Space: The Applicant requests 18.06 points for providing public open space. Points for this incentive are granted on a sliding scale based on the percentage of the net lot area. The conceptual layout yields 27,032 square feet of additional open space above the required square feet of public use space for a total of 18.06 points. The public open space provided will consist of zones, intended to serve different functions, in order to meet the needs of various users of the site. These spaces are: (1) The Metro Commons, (2) The Promenade, and (3) the Lawn. The Metro Commons, located along the Wisconsin Avenue frontage, will create a new open space area fronting on Wisconsin Avenue that will total nearly 17,000 square feet, which will facilitate a variety of new uses benefitting the public. The Promenade connects the Metro Commons to the interior Lawn. The proposed design of the promenade envisions a unified public space that works both for pedestrians passing through and as a destination in itself. The Lawn area is envisioned as a flexible, inviting green space. The proposed location of the Lawn will allow for the creation of an area for all of Bethesda, buffered from the noise and traffic of the surrounding streets by the proposed building. The Applicant's intention is to transform the Lawn into a destination. The Metro Commons open area creates an inviting entry to the wide Promenade and the Lawn area which, together, when included with the central open area provided by the existing Newlands Building, offer the public nearly an acre of connected public use space.

Consistent with the CR Guidelines, the open space will be: directly accessible to a street; open to the public; designed so that the loading or parking facilities are screened or faced with active uses, contain seating, trash receptacles, landscaping, and other amenities; be at least 35 feet wide; designed so that walls of any residential floor area facing the open space have windows on at least 60 percent of the façade between three and eight feet; and designed so that any dwelling unit facing the open space will have access to the open space. Staff supports the category at this time, with the final design and points to be determined at the time of Site Plan.

Structured Parking: The Applicant requests 20 points for providing structured parking in a below-grade parking structure. Staff supports this request at this time.

Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

Building Lot Termination (BLT): The Applicant requests 8.69 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. Staff supports the Applicant's request at this time.

Energy Conservation and Generation: The Sector Plan requires that all projects in the High-Performance area must exceed the current ASHRAE 90.1 requirement by at least 15 percent. The CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines states that up to 15 points are available for constructing buildings that exceed the energy-efficiency standards for the building type by 17.5 percent, however the BOZ permits up to 25 points for this benefit. Exceeding the energy efficiency standards by 17.5 percent in the BOZ proportionally allows the Project to receive 15 public benefit points. Staff supports the 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

As conditioned, 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. Pre-submittal Community Meeting minutes
- B. IAC meeting minutes
- C. Citizen Correspondence
- D. Design Advisory Panel summary letter(s)
- E. Applicant's June 27, 2018 Design Advisory Panel submission
- F. Applicant's June 27, 2018 Design Advisory presentation
- G. Community correspondence-June 27, 2018 Design Advisory Panel meeting
- H. Sketch Plan
- I. Agency Letters