

**7749 OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD
SKETCH PLAN NO. 320240010**



Request for up to 246,000 square feet of density for a mixed-use development, including up to 6,000 square feet of non-residential uses and up to 240,000 square feet of residential uses with 15% MPDUs, and up to 89,165 square feet of BOZ density with associated PIP payment.

No. 320240010

Completed: 12-01-2023

MCPB

Item No. 7

12-14-2023

Montgomery County

Planning Board

2425 Reedie Drive, Floor 14

Wheaton, MD 20902

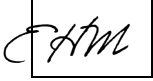
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LOCATION/ADDRESS

Located in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and St Elmo Avenue

MASTER PLAN

2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*

ZONE

CR-5.0, C-5.0, R-5.0, H-175' and the Bethesda Overlay Zone

PROPERTY SIZE

0.72 acres

APPLICANT

Stonebridge

ACCEPTANCE DATE

9/20/2023

REVIEW BASIS

Chapter 59

Summary:

- The Sketch Plan proposes to redevelop the existing low-rise commercial buildings into a 17-story mixed-use building with ground floor retail and residential above, with 15% MPDUs.
- The Applicant proposes to use up to 89,165 square feet of Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) density with associated Park Impact Payment (PIP), to be determined at Site Plan review.
- No correspondence has been received on the Project.
- Staff recommends approval of the Sketch Plan with conditions.

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SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS

SKETCH PLAN 320240010

Staff recommends approval of 7749 Old Georgetown Road Sketch Plan No. 320240010, for up to 246,000 square feet of density for a multi-use development, including up to 6,000 square feet of non-residential uses and up to 240,000 square feet of residential uses with 15% MPDUs, and up to 89,165 square feet of BOZ density with associated PIP payment, zoned CR-5.0, C- 5.0, R- 5.0, H-175' and within the Bethesda Overlay Zone, in the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* ("Sector Plan") area. The following site development elements shown on the latest electronic version of Sketch Plan No. 320240010, 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 246,000 square feet of total development comprised of up to 240,000 square feet of residential uses and up to 6,000 square feet of nonresidential uses.
2. **Height**
The development is limited to a maximum average building height of 175 feet, as measured from the building height measuring point to be illustrated on the Certified Site Plan.
3. **Incentive Density**
The development must be constructed with the public benefits listed below unless modifications are made under Section 59.7.3.3.I. Total points must equal at least 100 and be chosen from at least 4 categories as required by Section 59.4.5.4.A.2. The requirements of Division 59.4.7 and the *CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines* must be fulfilled for each public benefit. Final points will be established at Site Plan approval.
 - a) Connectivity and Mobility, achieved by providing fewer than the maximum parking spaces under the Zoning Ordinance;
 - b) Diversity of Uses and Activities achieved by providing units designed with enhanced accessibility for the disabled;

- c) Quality of Building and Site Design, achieved through architectural elevations, exceptional design, and structured parking; and
- d) Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment achieved through the purchase of building lot terminations, cool roof, energy conservation and energy generation, and a recycling facility plan.

4. Streetscape

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

5. Park Impact Payment

The Applicant must make a Park Impact Payment (PIP) to the M-NCPPC prior to the release of the first above-grade building permit. The final amount will be determined at Site Plan.

6. Green Cover

- a) At the time of Site Plan, the Applicant must provide a minimum 35% of Site Area as green cover as described in Section 2.4.1 of the *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* and Section 2.3.2 of the associated *Design Guidelines*; any proposed tree canopy must utilize tree species and canopy sizes at 20-year maturity per the *M-NCPPC Approved Trees Technical Manual*.
- b) Green roof areas credited towards the Green Cover requirement must be built in place and avoid the use of tray systems.
- c) The green cover credit on the rooftops must meet or exceed the minimum of intensive green roof standards, with a depth of appropriate media that is 6 inches or deeper.

7. Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines

At the time of Site Plan, the Applicant must demonstrate the following:

- a) Comments have been addressed from the Design Advisory Panel as specified in their June and July 2023 meeting minutes; and
 - b) Project conformance for street typology, parks and open space, site design, building form, creative placemaking, and any site-specific guidelines in accordance with the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines*.
8. The Planning Board has reviewed and accepts the recommendations of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (“MCDOT”) in its letter dated November 27, 2023, and incorporates them as conditions of the Sketch Plan approval. The Applicant must comply with each of the recommendations in the letter, which may be amended by MCDOT if the amendment does not conflict with any other conditions of the Sketch Plan approval.
9. The Planning Board has reviewed and accepts the recommendations of the Maryland State Highway Administration (“SHA”) in its letter dated November 15, 2023, and incorporates them as conditions of the Sketch Plan approval. The Applicant must comply with each of the recommendations in the letter, which may be amended by SHA if the amendment does not conflict with any other conditions of the Sketch Plan approval.

10. Future Coordination for the 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 during the appropriate application review:

- a) The Applicant must submit and receive approval of a Preliminary/Final Forest Conservation Plan;
- b) Provide and receive approval of a stormwater management concept plan consistent with Chapter 19 of the Montgomery County Code, which also addresses the recommendations of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, Water Quality Section (2.4.2.B) and the associated Design Guidelines on Pages 54-62 of the Sector Plan;
- c) Incorporate Bird-Safe Design elements into the building's architecture with emphasis on Glass Coverage and Glazing, per pages 80-81 of Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines;
- d) Provide a noise analysis as part of the Preliminary Plan submission;
- e) Provide a Canopy Exhibit and supplemental tree planting along streets and public spaces to support a minimum of 50 percent overall canopy cover, on a plan-wide basis, per the Sector Plan recommendations;
- f) Address the SITES & LEED recommendations of the Sector Plan;
- g) Submit a draft Energy use/generation model as required by the latest Bethesda Implementation Guidelines;
- h) Submit a Recycling Facility Plan;
- i) Explore architectural methods and/or visual amenities to minimize impacts of the blank wall on the northeastern façade;
- j) Dedicate additional public right-of-way, if necessary, on the Site's frontages on St. Elmo Avenue and Old Georgetown Road in compliance with the *2018 Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*; and
- k) At Preliminary Plan, the Applicant must participate in the implementation of the Bicycle Master Planned designated bicycle facilities along the Site's St. Elmo Avenue frontage.

11. **Validity**

A site plan must be submitted within 36 months after the date the resolution is sent per Section 59.7.3.3.G.

SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

VICINITY

The Project is located in the Woodmont Triangle District of downtown Bethesda at a unique 5-way intersection of Old Georgetown Road, St Elmo Avenue, Wilson Lane, and Arlington Road. The vicinity is developed with a mixture of office, retail, and residential buildings. To the north, St Elmo Avenue is predominantly developed with two-story buildings with ground floor retail and office above. Directly to the south along Old Georgetown Road is a 12-story office building. Across Old Georgetown Road to the southwest is a three-story retail and office space, the Montgomery County Board of Education, and a three-story office development referred to as Garden Plaza. Moving farther south and east towards Wisconsin Avenue and the downtown core, building heights increase. The Property is located approximately ¼ mile from the Bethesda Metro Station to the southeast.



Figure 1 - Vicinity Map with Subject Property highlighted in red, the Woodmont Triangle District noted in black dash

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Subject Site (Subject Property, Property, Site) is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and St Elmo Avenue. The Property is an assemblage of lots and parcels originally created by the 'Woodmont' Subdivision recorded in Plat Book No. 1, Plat No. 4.

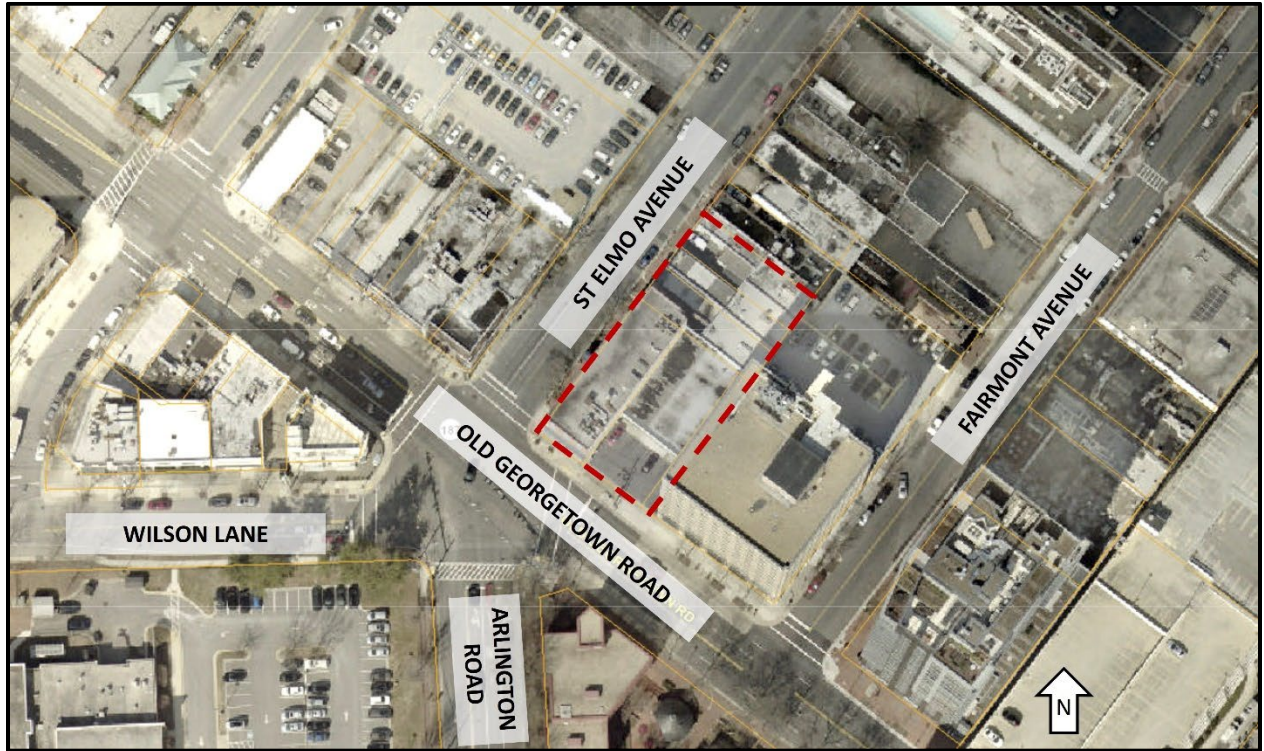


Figure 2 – Subject Property

SITE ANALYSIS

The Site totals 0.72 tract acres and is zoned CR-5.0, C-5.0, R-5.0, H-175' and within the Bethesda Overlay Zone. The Property is currently developed with several buildings, including a three-story office facing Old Georgetown Road with Old Georgetown Grill on the first floor, and a one-story Jewelry Exchange and parking lot facing Old Georgetown Road. On St Elmo Avenue, there are several one-story retail buildings with associated curb cuts including Bethesda Florist and Bethesda Boxing and Kickboxing Academy.

The Property is located within the Little Falls Branch watershed which is a Use I-P¹ watershed. The Site, which is within Downtown Bethesda, is currently developed and not associated with any areas of

¹ Use I-P: WATER CONTACT RECREATION & PROTECTION OF AQUATIC LIFE, AND PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY. Waters that are suitable for: water contact sports: play and leisure time activities where the human body may come in direct contact with the surface water; fishing; the growth and propagation of fish (other than trout); other aquatic life, and wildlife; agricultural water supply; industrial water supply and uses as public water supply.

forest, or 100-year flood plains, streams, or stream buffers. Trees are found on Old Georgetown Road and St. Elmo Avenue; all trees within the bounds of the Property are sized below 24” in diameter-at-breast-height (DBH). Soils associated with the Property are classified generally as urban land and are not considered highly erodible or otherwise sensitive; additionally, there are no areas of steep slopes within the project area. There are no known rare, threatened, or endangered species on Site. Located across the street along Old Georgetown Road, an existing historic property is identified as Leslie Beall House, resource number 35/014-013A.

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROPOSAL

The Applicant proposes to redevelop the Property with a new mixed-use building up to 175 feet in height with ground floor retail and residential above. The Proposal would include up to 246,000 square feet of development comprised of up to 6,000 square feet of nonresidential uses and up to 240,000 square feet of residential uses for approximately 240 units, with 15% moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs). The development proposes to utilize approximately 89,165 square feet of Bethesda Overlay Zone density with an associated Park Impact Payment (PIP) which will be finalized at the time of Site Plan review.

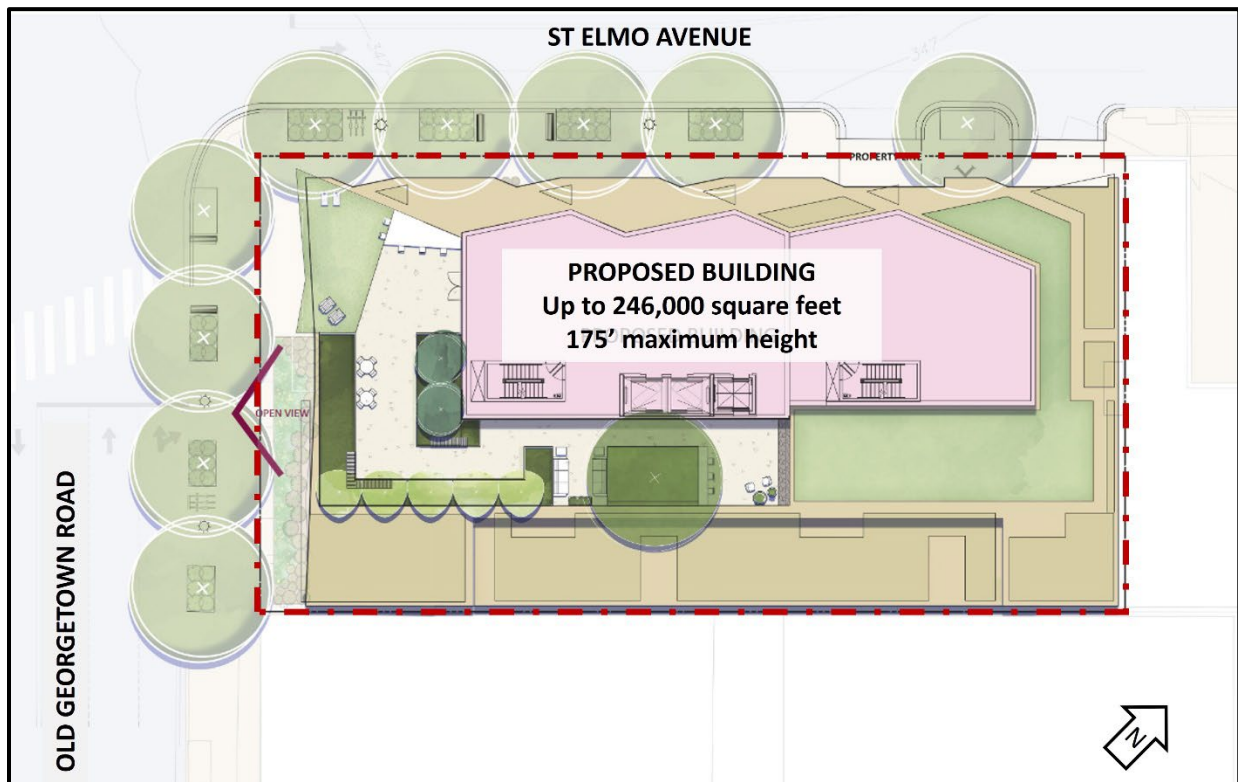


Figure 3: Sketch Plan 320240010

BUILDING/ARCHITECTURE

The Project's massing intends to create a visually distinctive building and focal point when entering Bethesda from Old Georgetown Road with a 'chevron' design. The massing includes a 6-story base podium, with the middle floors featuring a 10-foot stepback on St Elmo Avenue and 5-foot stepback on Old Georgetown Road along with material changes. These stepbacks accentuate the corner of the building and the top which will feature a focal element, with the chevron design weaving planes from top to bottom. The design will incorporate balconies to maximize views and sunlight into the residential units. At the conceptual stage, the Applicant anticipates a transparent ground floor for the retail space, with a change in materials above to emphasize the stepback. The massing includes a twenty-two-foot- six-inch (22 ft 6 in) separation above the 6th floor from the adjacent office building to the south (7735 Old Georgetown Road) as recommended in the Design Guidelines for tower setback to provide adequate light and area. This area will be utilized as green roof and additional amenity space for the residents.



Figure 4: Pedestrian Level Rendering of St Elmo/Old Georgetown Road corner looking southeast



Figure 5: Birds eye rendering of St Elmo façade looking south



Figure 6: Birds eye rendering of Old Georgetown Road Façade looking northeast

The Project was presented to the Bethesda Design Advisory Panel (DAP) at their June and July 2023 meetings, and minutes to these meetings are included as Attachment C. The DAP was enthusiastic about redevelopment potential at this important corner in downtown Bethesda and was encouraged by the Applicant’s design, with particular interest in how the chevron design will ground and the relationship of the building’s first floor with the public realm. The Project will return to the DAP during Site Plan review, and the DAP requested the Applicant provide options for the corner design at that time based on meeting discussions.

OPEN SPACE

Per the standards of Section 59.4.5.4 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Applicant is not required to provide public open space because its tract area is less than an acre (0.72 acres) with two frontages.

TRANSPORTATION

The Site is a corner lot with frontages on Old Georgetown Road and St. Elmo Avenue. Transportation access, safety, and comfort will be improved for all travel modes in and around the Site. One significant improvement is the elimination of the excessively wide curb cut that currently exists on Old Georgetown Road. This will be replaced with an upgraded streetscape that includes a row of trees where none are present today, buffering a wider, uninterrupted sidewalk. Utilities will be relocated underground.

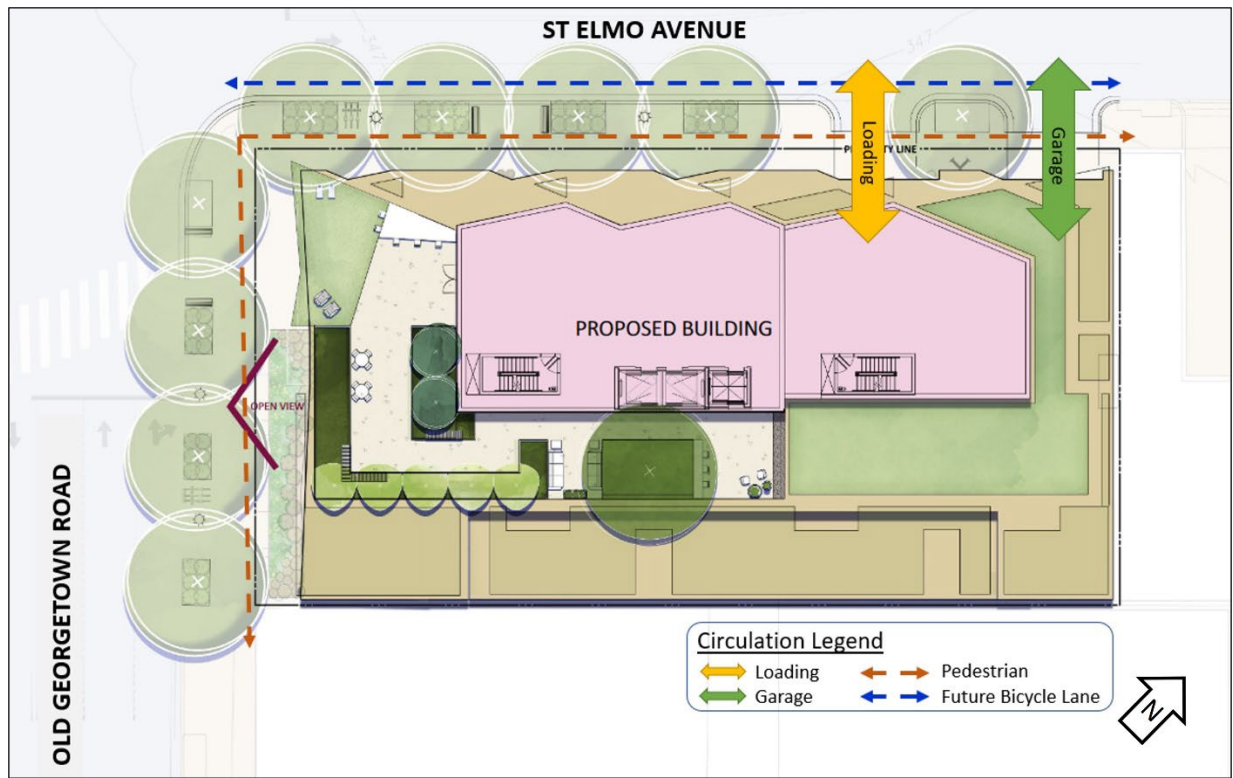


Figure 7: Multimodal Access and Circulation Exhibit

The Applicant is providing both onsite loading and parking, which will be accessed by adjacent curb cuts on St. Elmo Avenue. The design of the loading bay and the capacity of the garage will be determined at the time of Site Plan. Locating the loading and parking access points on the lower-classified street, and as far from the adjacent intersection as feasible, aligns with best practices for transportation safety as it reduces potential conflicts with other transportation users. Bicycle parking will be provided within the parking garage (long-term) and on St. Elmo Avenue (short-term).

The Applicant will participate in the implementation of the master-planned striped bike lanes along the Site's frontage on St. Elmo Avenue. In coordination with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation the Applicant will develop street cross sections to finalize dimensions and alignments of the street elements. The nature of participation in the St. Elmo Avenue bike lanes will be determined at the time of Preliminary Plan. Pedestrian access will be improved on both street frontages with enhanced, buffered sidewalks in compliance with the 2017 Bethesda Downtown Streetscape Guidelines.

ENVIRONMENT

St. Elmo Avenue is designated as canopy corridor within the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* (Sector Plan). The 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines* recommend that streets within the canopy corridors provide the maximum sidewalk width possible and consider opportunities for double rows of trees (page 32). The Applicant is proposing to incorporate larger tree pits (7 ft x 12 ft) and larger shade trees (4-inch caliper) to enhance the St. Elmo Avenue frontage to simulate the canopy corridor requirements. Additionally, the Applicant proposes including freestanding planter boxes on both frontages (Old Georgetown Road and St. Elmo Avenue) to increase the extent of green plantings delivered as part of the Project.

Forest Conservation

A Natural Resources Inventory/ Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) No. 420232320 was approved for the Subject Property on August 31, 2023. The plan, designated No. 420232320, identifies the existing man-made and natural features associated with the Property, such as the buildings, associated parking, street trees, and landscape elements. As described above, the on-site setting does not include significant or specimen trees as buildings and surface parking areas make up most of the Site.

Although no forest is on-site or adjacent to the Property, a Forest Conservation Plan or Exemption will be submitted as part of the future Preliminary and Site Plan submissions.

Green Cover

The Sector Plan includes a number of recommendations to achieve the urban green goals. An important recommendation to this effect is the on-site 35% green coverage minimum. The green cover may include singularly or a combination of intensive green roofs (6 inches or deeper) or tree canopy cover. The Application consists of a Site Area of 19,000 square feet (SF), which results in a

green cover requirement of at least 6,500 SF. Currently, the Application proposes to meet this requirement through a 6-inch-deep intensive green roof. However, the Application must provide supplemental tree planting along streets and public spaces to support the Sector Plan wide goal of a minimum of 50 percent overall canopy cover on a plan-wide basis.

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. A waiver may be submitted per Section 2.2.2 of the 1983 Noise Guidelines for any exterior open spaces.

Stormwater Management

Although a stormwater management concept plan is not required at Sketch Plan, the Applicant has provided a concept stormwater management narrative. This narrative describes the proposed on-site stormwater management for the project as using Environmental Site Design (ESD) to the maximum extent practicable via green roof facilities and bio-retention, due to existing constraints. Final treatment methods and/or waivers will be determined at Preliminary and Site Plan. The Applicant must obtain approval of the stormwater management concept from the Department of Permitting Services at Site Plan and will be further evaluated at that time.

SECTION 4: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Applicant held a pre-submittal public meeting on June 26, 2023 at the Bethesda Chevy-Chase Regional Services Center related to the 7749 Old Georgetown Road Sketch Plan. The meeting complied with all submittal and noticing requirements and minutes are attached as Attachment D. Members of the public asked two questions: 1) does the Park Impact Payment go directly to (Montgomery) Parks or into the County's General Fund? 2) is the anticipated project timeline associated with a fast-tracked process or normal time frame?

The Applicant responded that the Park Impact Payment goes into a Capital Improvement Project Fund that is utilized by Montgomery Parks and Planning for the design and improvement of parks in downtown Bethesda. The Project is not considered a 'Speed to Market' project which allows an accelerated timeframe, this Project will require subsequent applications for Preliminary and Site Plan.

SECTION 5: SKETCH PLAN 320240010 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

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;

Table 1: 7749 Old Georgetown Road Sketch Plan Data Table for CR- 5.0, C- 5.0, R-5.0, H-175’ Zone, Optional Method, Section 59.4.5.4

Development Standard	Permitted/ Required	Proposed
Tract Area	n/a	31,367 sf (0.72 ac)
Prior Dedication	n/a	12,367 sf (0.28 ac)
Proposed Dedication	n/a	0 sf
Site Area¹ (Tract Area minus Dedications)	n/a	19,000 sf (0.44 ac)
Mapped Density CR-5.0, C-5.0, R-5.0, H-175’ Residential (GFA/ FAR)	156,835 sf (3.0)	240,000 sf (7.65)
Commercial (GFA/FAR)	156,835 sf (3.0)	6,000 sf (0.19)
Total Mapped Density (GFA/FAR)	156,835 sf	156,835 sf (3.0)
Bethesda Overlay Zone Density	n/a	89,165 sf (2.84)
MPDU requirement	15%	15%
Total GFA/FAR		246,000 sf (7.84)
Building Height, max average	175 ft	175 ft
Public Open Space (min s.f.)	0%	0%

¹ Site area is determined by tract area minus any previous and proposed dedications per Section 59.4.1.7.A

a) Implement the recommendations of applicable master plans (59.4.5.1.A)

The Project substantially conforms to the recommendations for the Property included in the 2017 *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*. Specifically, this Sector 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 include:

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 Property is designated as site 36 on pages 111 and 112 of the Sector Plan. Woodmont Triangle is an eclectic, mixed-use district that balances high-rise residential development with small-scale retail and arts amenities. This district serves as an office and retail center during the day, and as a restaurant district during the evenings and weekends. Woodmont Triangle is primarily a commercial area, containing both retail and office uses. Residential uses were once limited, but since the *2006 Woodmont Triangle Amendment*, additional apartments and condominiums have been developed in the district. The predominance of low buildings on small parcels in Woodmont Triangle creates a strong contrast with the higher density residential blocks that have recently developed in the district as well as in the Metro Core. Parking lots and decks, both public and private, occupy the limited number of otherwise vacant properties. The area has little open space and few visually distinctive buildings. Lack of distinguishing characteristics among the streets creates orientation problems for visitors. Despite its lack of visual quality, the district’s diverse business activity, low-scale buildings and low-speed street pattern contribute to the area’s appeal. Due in part to its angled roadway system that creates triangles within the Triangle, this district features oddly configured and dispersed retail spaces, and difficult accessibility and visibility from major roadways. However, these conditions have allowed a more diverse and local boutique retail environment to flourish.

Specifically, the Project addresses the following goals as outlined in the Sector Plan and Woodmont Triangle District sections of the Sector Plan:

- *Improve intersections and environment for pedestrians and bikes through lighting and safety measures.*

The Project will update the Old Georgetown Road frontage, and the intersection of, and frontage along, St Elmo Avenue with the Bethesda Streetscape standards. This includes undergrounding overhead utilities and providing lighting, street trees, benches, and trash receptacles as recommended by the Streetscape Standards.

- *Enhance bike connectivity.*

The Project will participate in the implementation of master planned bicycle lanes on St Elmo Avenue as envisioned by the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* and will also provide short term bicycle parking on the exterior of the building to support the multimodal activity to the proposed retail space, and long-term bicycle parking for the users of the building.

- *Increase 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.*

The Project will result in significant improvements to the treatment of stormwater management on-site, as there are no known stormwater management facilities located on the Property. As recommended by the Sector Plan, the Project will achieve 35% green cover by providing green roof. Additionally, the Project is located within the High Performance Area and will meet the requirements in the Sector Plan and Bethesda Overlay Zone for exceeding current energy efficient standards for buildings by 17.5%.

- *Continue the Constrained Long-term Parking Policy and promote incentives to reduce parking.*

Given its proximity to transit, the Project will provide significantly fewer than the maximum number of parking spaces on-site. The Project proposes to provide a minimum of 143 parking spaces on-site. This is well below the maximum number of parking spaces allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.

- *Promote infill development with higher densities and building heights nearest the central core of Downtown Bethesda to accommodate future growth.*

The Property is currently improved with low-density, aging commercial buildings. Given its location within walking distance of the Bethesda Metro Station, the Project is proposing to redevelop the site with a 17-story mixed-use, transit-oriented development.

Environmental Recommendations

St Elmo Avenue is identified in the Sector Plan as a Canopy Corridor. Canopy Corridor designations are intended to create green corridors that connect parks, trails, stream buffers, and denser forest networks beyond the Bethesda boundaries. The corridors also align with recommended bike and pedestrian priority streets where tree canopy becomes

a crucial element to enhance shade and comfort while also providing an ecological benefit.

In aligning the proposed development with these goals, the Applicant proposes improvements to the St Elmo Avenue streetscape as well as providing a landscaped urban boulevard on Old Georgetown Road. The streetscape will improve the pedestrian realm for the benefit of the greater Woodmont Triangle neighborhood.

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

The Property is currently developed with several one to three story commercial buildings, with parking and associated curb cuts. The Project will replace the single-use commercial with a mixed-use building featuring ground floor retail and residential above.

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 Applicant proposes to provide parking within a below grade parking garage. The building will activate the ground floor with retail uses and provide multi-family units within walking distance to the Bethesda Metro Station. The streetscape on Old Georgetown Road and St Elmo Avenue will also be enhanced with Bethesda Streetscape standards including bicycle lanes on St Elmo Avenue to encourage a variety of mobility options for the users of the building.

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

The Woodmont Triangle features a mix of older single story commercial buildings, mid-range office buildings, and newer mixed-use and residential towers. The surrounding properties vary in building heights ranging from one story commercial to 22-story residential (St Elmo apartments currently under development). This Proposal, featuring a new 17-story mixed-use residential building, will be compatible with the surrounding density, heights, and mix of uses found within the Woodmont Triangle.

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

Woodmont Triangle is primarily a commercial area, containing both retail and office uses. Residential uses were once limited, but since the 2006 Woodmont Triangle Amendment additional apartments and condominiums have been developed in the district. This

Proposal that includes ground floor retail and residential above, will contribute to balancing the amount of residential with the existing retail and office uses.

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 100 public benefit points from a minimum of 4 categories to achieve the desired incentive density above the standard method limit. The proposed categories are discussed in further detail in Finding 6 below. Final determination of public benefit points will be determined at the time of Site Plan.

2. *Substantially conforms to the recommendations of the applicable master plan:*

As discussed in Finding 1.a above, the Project substantially conforms to 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;*

The Proposal will achieve compatible relationships between existing and pending nearby development. The massing will provide a setback from the existing commercial building to the south on Old Georgetown Road as recommended by the Bethesda Design Guidelines and provide setbacks above the base on the Old Georgetown Road and St Elmo façade to reduce perceived bulk and mass from the street views.

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

All vehicular access will be provided from St. Elmo Avenue. Separate, adjacent bays will be provided for loading and garage access on the eastern side of the Site. The pedestrian experience will be significantly improved with a wide street buffer, enhanced with trees and understory planters. The sidewalk will be at least 10-feet-wide, in compliance with the Bethesda Downtown Streetscape Guidelines. St. Elmo Avenue is a canopy corridor, which envisions a double row of trees. This is an especially constrained Site, and the Applicant is strongly encouraged to add as much vegetation as possible on either side of the clear pedestrian zone. The dimensions and elements of the streetscape will be finalized in coordination with Montgomery County Department of Transportation at the time of

Preliminary Plan. The grade and material of the sidewalk will extend across the loading and garage bays to increase the visibility of pedestrians to motorists.

As conditioned, the Applicant will also participate in the future installation of the master-planned, striped bike lanes envisioned along St. Elmo in the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*. The Applicant will continue to coordinate with MCDOT and SHA on any potential modifications to the intersection of St. Elmo Avenue and Old Georgetown Road to accommodate the bike lanes.

All onsite vehicular parking will be provided in the below-grade parking garage, accessed from St. Elmo. The Applicant has indicated that they are providing approximately 143 spaces on-site, which is fewer than the minimum required based on the requirements of the underlying zoning. However, it is important to note that this Site is located within the Bethesda Parking Lot District which allows redevelopment projects to provide as few as zero spaces onsite. The final number of parking spaces will be determined at the time of Site Plan. On-street parking is envisioned along the Site frontage. The final number of spaces will be identified in the future Site Plan Application.

Bicycle parking is required for both the residential and the commercial uses proposed on the Site. Long-term bicycle parking will be provided within the parking garage. Short-term bicycle parking is shown within the public right-of-way but outside the pedestrian clear zone on St. Elmo Avenue.

The site access, circulation, parking, and loading is satisfactory and will be further refined with future regulatory applications.

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 of the Zoning Ordinance, 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 4 categories. The Applicant proposes to exceed the 100-point requirement utilizing 4 categories. Although at the time of Sketch Plan review only an outline of public benefits needs to be approved, the following table shows both the categories and points for the public benefits requested at

Sketch Plan to demonstrate the project’s ability to meet the requirement to provide sufficient benefit points.

Table 2: Public Benefit Calculations- Division 59-4.7 as Modified by BOZ 59-4.9.2

Public Benefit	Maximum Points Allowed	Proposed
Connectivity and Mobility		
Minimum Parking	20	14.8
Diversity of Uses and Activities		
Enhanced Accessibility	20	7.5
Quality Building and Site Design		
Architectural Elevations	20	15
Exceptional Design	30	25
Structured Parking	20	20
Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment		
Building Lot Terminations (BLT)	30	4.9
Cool Roof	15	10
Energy Conservation and Generation	25	15
Recycling Facility Plan	10	5
Total Points	100 (required)	117.2

Per Section 59.4.9.2.C.4.g of the Zoning Ordinance, the Bethesda Overlay Zone eliminates the category for Transit Proximity, increases the maximum amount of public benefit points available in certain categories, and requires a minimum amount of public benefit points for Exceptional Design and Energy Conservation and Generation. Applicable to this Sketch Plan are the Overlay Zone’s increase in maximum points available for Minimum Parking (from 10 to 20 maximum points), Architectural Elevations (from 20 to 30 maximum points), Exceptional Design (from 10 to 30 maximum points), Cool Roof (from 10 to 15 maximum points), and Energy Conservation and Generation (from 15 to 25 maximum points).

CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY

Minimum Parking

The Applicant requests 14.8 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 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 category at this time.

DIVERSITY OF USES AND ACTIVITIES

Enhanced Accessibility

The Applicant requests 7.5 points for constructing dwelling units with interiors that satisfy the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Points for this incentive are granted on a sliding scale calculated on the percentage of complying units. Final determination of complying units will be made at Site Plan. Staff supports the category at this time.

QUALITY BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

Architectural Elevations

The Applicant requests 15 points for providing architectural elevations as part of the Certified Site Plan showing particular elements of the design such as minimum amounts of transparency, maximum separation between doors, and other design priorities of the applicable Sector Plan and implementing design guidelines. While Staff supports the category at this time, we recommend the Applicant include elements enhancing the corner design at the time of Site Plan to strengthen the category.

Exceptional Design

The Applicant requests 25 points for building and/or site design that enhances the character of a setting. As a site receiving an allocation of Bethesda Overlay Zone density, 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 fulfills many recommendations of the *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan* and Design Guidelines which was presented to the Bethesda Design Advisory Panel twice in June and July of 2023. At their July 2023 meeting, the Panel voted that the Project is on track to meet a minimum 10 design excellence points with options for the corner design to be included in the Site Plan level review. Final points will 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 the category at this time.

PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Building Lot Termination (BLT) Purchase

The Applicant requests 4.9 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.

Cool Roof

The Applicant requests 10 points for proposing to provide a cool roof that will collectively meet or exceed a solar reflectance index (SRI) of 75 with a slope at or below a ratio of 2:12, and a minimum SRI of 25 for slopes above 2:12. Staff supports the category at this time.

Energy Conservation and Generation

The Applicant is requesting 15 points for providing a building that exceeds applicable energy efficiency standards by 17.5%. A draft energy model will be required at the time of Site Plan. Staff supports the category at this time.

Recycling Facility Plan

The Applicant requests 5 points for providing a recycling facility plan at the time of Site Plan. Points are granted for plans that satisfy the Montgomery County Executive Regulation 15-04AM and/or Montgomery County Executive Regulation 18-04. Additional points may be granted for recycling plans that exceed the applicable regulations and for facilities that are integrated into building and site design, are readily accessible and easy to find without being visually disruptive. The Applicant will provide a Recycling Facility Plan for review by the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection at the time of Site Plan review. Staff supports the category 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.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

As conditioned, the Sketch Plan application satisfies the findings under Sections 59.7.3.3 and the applicable standards of the Zoning Ordinance and substantially conforms to the recommendations of the *2017 Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the 7749 Old Georgetown Road Sketch Plan No. 320240010 with the conditions specified at the beginning of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Sketch Plan

Attachment B: Agency Letters

Attachment C: Design Advisory Panel Minutes

Attachment D: Affidavit Regarding Community Meeting and Meeting Minutes