

Item 8 - Correspondence

From: [pablo.collins](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Comments on 7500 Strathmore Sketch Plan, hearing 1-25-2024
Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 11:04:54 AM
Attachments: [Comments 7500 Strathmore.docx](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please accept the attached comments in advance of the sketch plan hearing on 7500 Strathmore St.

Thank you

Pablo Collins
4820 Leland St
Chevy Chase MD 20815

Comments to the
Montgomery County Planning Board

For the Public Hearing on the

Sketch Plan for

7500 Strathmore St
Bethesda MD

January 25, 2024

Submitted by
Pablo Collins
4820 Leland St.
Chevy Chase MD

Traffic is like water, always finding the course of least resistance. Unenforced laws and signage offer little resistance.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed development at 7500 Strathmore St. in Bethesda. Let me say at the outset that I support the many new residential and commercial developments in the heart of Bethesda as they provide needed housing near Metro and will support additional restaurants and retail establishments which are vital to a thriving urban area. As a resident of the 4800 block of Leland St, around the corner from the proposed development, I would like to share a few observations about the proposed development and its impact on traffic in the neighborhood, responding first to statements already filed. My questions, comments and recommendations are addressed to the developer and the County for it is the responsibility of the latter to adapt existing infrastructure to accommodate a denser population.

Wells + Associates Traffic Statement 9/18/2023

I am in no position to evaluate the accuracy of the Wells+ Associates traffic statement, but even if it is right on target, it fails to address what really matters. How will the development of 7500 Strathmore affect traffic in the area? I anticipate many of these questions will be addressed as the project moves forward.

First of all, Wells + Associates estimates that the 32 existing dwelling units generate 24 personal trips during peak morning and evening hours and that the 180 proposed units will generate 167 trips during peak hours. The report, however fails to break down whether the additional traffic will utilize the alley, or Strathmore St. and how this traffic will interact with the larger community.

With limited parking on the alley, it is reasonable to assume that existing traffic is on Strathmore, a street that can be entered from eastbound or westbound Bradley Blvd. and can exit via three different routes: directly on Bradley, via Wellington to Bradley, or the one way exit onto Woodmont.

Placing the garage entrance on the alley has a significantly different impact on neighborhood traffic.

- The south end of the alley can only be accessed from Bradley Blvd westbound from Wisconsin. Eastbound traffic on Bradley cannot enter the alley. Traffic exiting the southern end of the alley can only turn right, westbound.
- The north end of the alley is accessed from Woodmont Ave. eastbound, or westbound if one is willing to cross a very low median. It can be reasonably assumed that the majority of vehicles accessing the garage entrance will utilize the Woodmont St entrance given proximity and greater ease of access.
- The proposed building is not only generating more traffic but shifting it from less utilized, less congested streets - Bradley Blvd., onto streets that are already congested - Woodmont, Leland, Bethesda Ave.

Secondly, I do not believe the estimate includes ancillary generation. More residents mean more ride share and meal delivery vehicles, more grocery delivery trucks, more service vehicles, more garbage trucks, and employees driving their own vehicles. In short, whether or not it was within the scope of the Wells study, the proposed building will have a much greater impact on neighborhood streets than the 143 additional peak hour trips it forecasts.

Finally, the trip generation report does not take into account other developments on the alley such as the recently opened Camille Apartments at 7000 Wisconsin Ave, which also utilize the alley, or the likelihood that the remaining garden apartments backing up on the alley will be replaced, generating even more alley traffic.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation, 12/22/2023

There are a number of inaccuracies in the Department's letter which have already been brought to its attention.

Comments 2e and 3a – there is no sidewalk to the east of the alley. Pedestrian access towards Wisconsin Ave is the driveway apron serving the parking area in front of 7106 Woodmont. There is no buffer between traffic and pedestrians.

Comment 5 - States that egress from the alley at Woodmont requires a right turn, which is only partially true. A left turn is possible if one crosses the very low median on Woodmont St. (While observing traffic at this location one afternoon I saw a vehicle exit from Strathmore onto Woodmont and make a left turn over the median into the garage serving the Solaire Apartments at 7077 Woodmont.)

Traffic Circulation Plan 12/06/2023

The final circulation plan filed 12/06/2023 is a significant improvement over the draft plan of 9/2/2023. The draft plan showed a passenger vehicle garage entrance angled in such a way as to guide ingress and egress traffic to Woodmont St. The final plan places the entrance perpendicular to the alley, which while perhaps more difficult to enter is directionally neutral, traffic can enter or exit from Bradley or Woodmont. This will help distribute the traffic load. In contravention of the Department of Transportation's statement, however, the Traffic Circulation plan shows traffic turning left on Woodmont from the alley.

Access to the loading dock and dumpster locations, however, is not clear. Does it presuppose traffic from one direction or another or is it directionally neutral?

The Final Traffic Circulation plan indicates that service vehicles will enter from eastbound Woodmont and exit toward Bradley. The plan, however, does not address how service vehicles will reach Woodmont. Trucks over 10,000 lbs., which includes garbage trucks, moving vans and larger delivery vehicles, are prohibited on the 4800 block of Leland St. Larger vehicles will need to pass through the intersection of Woodmont and Bethesda, already overburdened much of the day.

The Circulation plan also shows a drop off zone in front of the lobby, accessible only from Strathmore St. This is unrealistic. Ride share vehicles, especially those dropping off, and meal delivery vehicles will likely stop in the traffic lane on Woodmont at Strathmore, or in the pedestrian area in front of 7106 Woodmont rather than take the extra time to circle the block to reach the designated drop zone.

Observations, Questions

Traffic on the alley will increase as it is an effective alternate to Wisconsin Ave. between Woodmont and Bradley Blvd. Vehicles using this route can skip 3 traffic lights and significant congestion.

Has the developer given sufficient thought to construction vehicle access to the site given the weight restrictions on the 4800 block of Leland St?

Has the developer studied route plans for large service vehicles to enter the alley loading area given the weight restriction on the 4800 block of Leland St?

Can large vehicles safely negotiate the right turn from Woodmont into the alley, or will they need to utilize and potentially block both eastbound traffic lanes to negotiate the turn?

Has the developer or the County taken into account the likelihood that food delivery and shared vehicle drivers will be stopping in the traffic lane on Woodmont to do business as this is by far the shortest and quickest entry into the building?

Has the developer consulted with WSSC with respect to water main maintenance work at Woodmont and the alley which might necessitate street closures for a significant time period?

Is the developer or the county aware that during the evening rush hour eastbound traffic waiting for the light at Wisconsin often backs up beyond the Strathmore St entry into Woodmont, in contrast to Bradley which flows freely. (Pictures attached)

Recommendation

- Service area loading docks should be directionally neutral. The design should not presuppose traffic entering or exiting from a specific direction on the alley.
- In order to accommodate the traffic from this building, the Camille apartments and any future construction on the alley, the southern entry to the alley should be redesigned to accept traffic from either direction on Bradley rather than limited to westbound traffic. Among other positive effects, this modification would be to allow larger service trucks to enter the alley without needing to traverse the congested intersection at Woodmont and Bethesda Ave.

Under the proposed traffic circulation plan, heavy vehicles traveling from the I-270 corridor to the service area on the alley will likely enter Bethesda on Bradley, turn left on Arlington, right on Bethesda, right on Woodmont and right into the alley. Not only is it a longer distance, there are three traffic lights and frequent congestion, all of which leads to increased levels of truck exhaust. In contrast, allowing trucks to make the left turn from eastbound Bradley into the alley is a significantly shorter distance, less congested and results in lower vehicle emissions.

- Consideration needs to be given to the likelihood that ride share and food delivery drivers will stop on Woodmont, rather than circle the block in order to reach the loading area in front of the building. This cannot be resolved with the expectation that traffic laws will be enforced.



Woodmont and Wisconsin looking west, vehicles waiting to turn right on Wisconsin at peak evening hour



Looking East on Woodmont from Strathmore toward Wisconsin at peak evening hour



Strathmore and Bradley, looking east, toward Wisconsin, peak evening hour



Strathmore and Bradley, looking west, peak evening hour

From: [Ellen Rader](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: 7025 Strathmore/ Sketch Plan 320240030
Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 10:22:22 AM
Attachments: [The Strathmore Sketch Plan Comments.docx](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Planning Board Members,
Attached is my written testimony for the noted project.

Ellen Rader

MNCPPC Planning Board,

Sketch Plan 320240030 for The Strathmore is on the upcoming agenda for public comment. I am submitting my comments here for your review. My concerns are with traffic flow, pedestrian and bike safety. I understand that a LATR Transportation Study is required. In the November 2023 staff report, Katie Mencari noted that “the South Bethesda section of the Sector Plan recommends an enhanced intersection of Woodmont Avenue at Strathmore Street. This may be required at the time of TIS that will be required at the time of Preliminary Plan.” As part of the Sketch Plan review by the Board I think some concerns be discussed as they could impact building design.

Currently the alley is known by locals as a cut-through to Bradley Blvd to avoid all the traffic and two lights on Wisconsin Avenue. In the future the alley will have loading and parking garage entrances on either end and hence will be used and known by more vehicles as an alternative to Wisconsin Avenue. This alternative “street” will be used because there is no right turn onto Strathmore from Woodmont yet Strathmore is a perfectly wide functional street except for the tail end at Woodmont. Strathmore also has sidewalks. The alley does not have a sidewalk and none are planned for the alley. There is enough right-of-way at the tail end of Strathmore to modify Strathmore.

The proposed lobby of the building with vehicular drop-off is directly across from The Wellington Condominium which was built in the 1950s. At that location The Wellington has tandem parking spaces that are perpendicular to Strathmore Street. Along the tandem parking is a proposed bike lane. The safe flow of traffic, bikes and people in this area needs to be looked at closely and changes made if necessary. One may conclude that The Strathmore lobby entrance be located further down Strathmore Street away from Woodmont Avenue.

As plans for The Strathmore progress the soil and groundwater beneath the proposed building need to be investigated for possible harmful pollutants. The site is located next to what was a longtime established dry cleaners. If I recall correctly, pollutants were found where The Flats and public garage were built at nearby Woodmont and Bethesda Avenue.

Please add me as an interested party to the mailing list for this project.

Sincerely,

Ellen Rader

4841 Leland Street

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [ken sosne](#)
To: [ken sosne](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Greg Fernebok](#); [Patty Ball](#)
Subject: Re: 7025 Strathmore Street Proposal Bethesda
Date: Saturday, January 20, 2024 5:33:43 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Add full address for the comment file

Kenneth J Sosne
6820 Wisconsin Avenue Unit 6003
Bethesda MD 20815

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

On Sat, Jan 20, 2024 at 5:19 AM, ken sosne
<ksosne@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Honorable Planning Chair

I am writing in regards to the above noted project. As a resident of the Adagio at 6820 Wisconsin Avenue the 170 proposed units and associated parking is too large in scale for the back residential street. Using the service alley for another 155 parking spots would not work. Our quality of life by first construction and than close to 200 more vehicles will impact a current quiet neighborhood. I ask that the scale be reduced and access come not off the alley. Please deny this current request as proposed.

Sincerely
Ken Sosne
Unit 6003 Adagio 6820 Wisconsin Avenue

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Greg Fernebok](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Plan Number of 320240030- 7025 Strathmore Street, Bethesda, MD
Date: Friday, January 19, 2024 4:47:11 PM
Attachments: [Adagio Letter to the Planning Board- Jan 19 2024.pdf](#)
Importance: High

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please find attached correspondence for the records on the Sketch Plan for 7025 Strathmore Street in Bethesda, Maryland. The Plan number is 320240030.

Thank you,

Greg

Greg Fernebok, Board President
Adagio Condominium
6820 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20815

THE ADAGIO CONDOMINIUM

6820 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20815

Via email: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org and U.S. Mail

January 19, 2024

Montgomery County Planning Board

2425 Reddie Drive

Wheaton, Maryland 20902

Attn: Montgomery County Planning Board Chair and Board

Re: Proposed Multi-Family Development located at

7025 Strathmore Street

Bethesda, Maryland 20815

Sketch Plan Number: 320240030

Board Members,

My name is Greg Fernebok. As the Board President of the Council of Unit Owners of the Adagio Condominium, I am reaching out to you to share our concerns with the proposed multi-family development at 7025 Strathmore Street in Bethesda, Maryland. The Adagio Condominium is located at 6820 Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda, Maryland. We are a 92 Unit Residential Condominium with approximately 180 residents. The Adagio is located only half a block from the proposed development. Its possible construction as proposed in the Sketch Plan has major negative implications to our Unit Owners' quality of life.

First and foremost, the proposed development is simply too large for our neighborhood. The increase in population density would put a strain on our already overburdened infrastructure, leading to increased traffic congestion, noise pollution, and strain on our public services.

The construction of this project would result in significant traffic on the Service Alley behind the proposed development. See attached Exhibit A for alley location and Adagio's location relative to the Development and the numerous other Properties already using the Service Alley for Garage & Service Egress.

When completed, the proposed development would add another 150 parking spaces with Entrance/Exit to the alley, overloading an alley that is already overstrained with multiple residential and commercial properties using it. The attached Exhibit B shows pictures of all the existing Properties that use this Alley as a Garage and Service egress. Note how tight and restricted this alley is; adding another 300 car trips daily to it will be a burden to an already overused area.

In the initial Public Meeting when the developer presented the project before their submission to Park & Planning, the plan showed the Garage Entrance for Guests and Residents on Strathmore Street rather than the Alley. In our opinion Strathmore Street is the better choice for vehicular egress and would help reduce the burden on an already strained Alley

Secondly, the majority of the Adagio Residents are concerned by the Density of the project. Our feeling is the 170,000 square foot development on 7 stories is overwhelming in its size for the location of the project, which would be right next to primarily low rise 3 story apartments and single-family homes. We feel the scale and height of the project should be reduced to fit better with its location in the neighborhood. The reduced scope would also lighten the burden of traffic/trips on the Service Alley used by the Adagio and the other existing properties.

In conclusion, we strongly urge you to reconsider this proposed Multi-family Development Garage Entrance on the Service Alley and relocate it to the original design on the Strathmore Street side of the project. We also ask that the Scale/Size of the project have a reduced Density to better fit with the surrounding low-rise properties on Strathmore and Bradley Boulevard. The Adagio and its 180 residents believe that this project is simply not the right fit for our neighborhood as proposed and will cause detrimental harm to our property and the other existing properties in this area.

If you, the Board, or Planning Staff would like to talk in further detail about our concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at gregfernebok@gmail.com or 301-518-8200.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Greg Fernebok

Greg Fernebok

Adagio Condominium Board President

Exhibit A

Key: The Orange Line is the Service Alley. The Blue marks are affected Properties

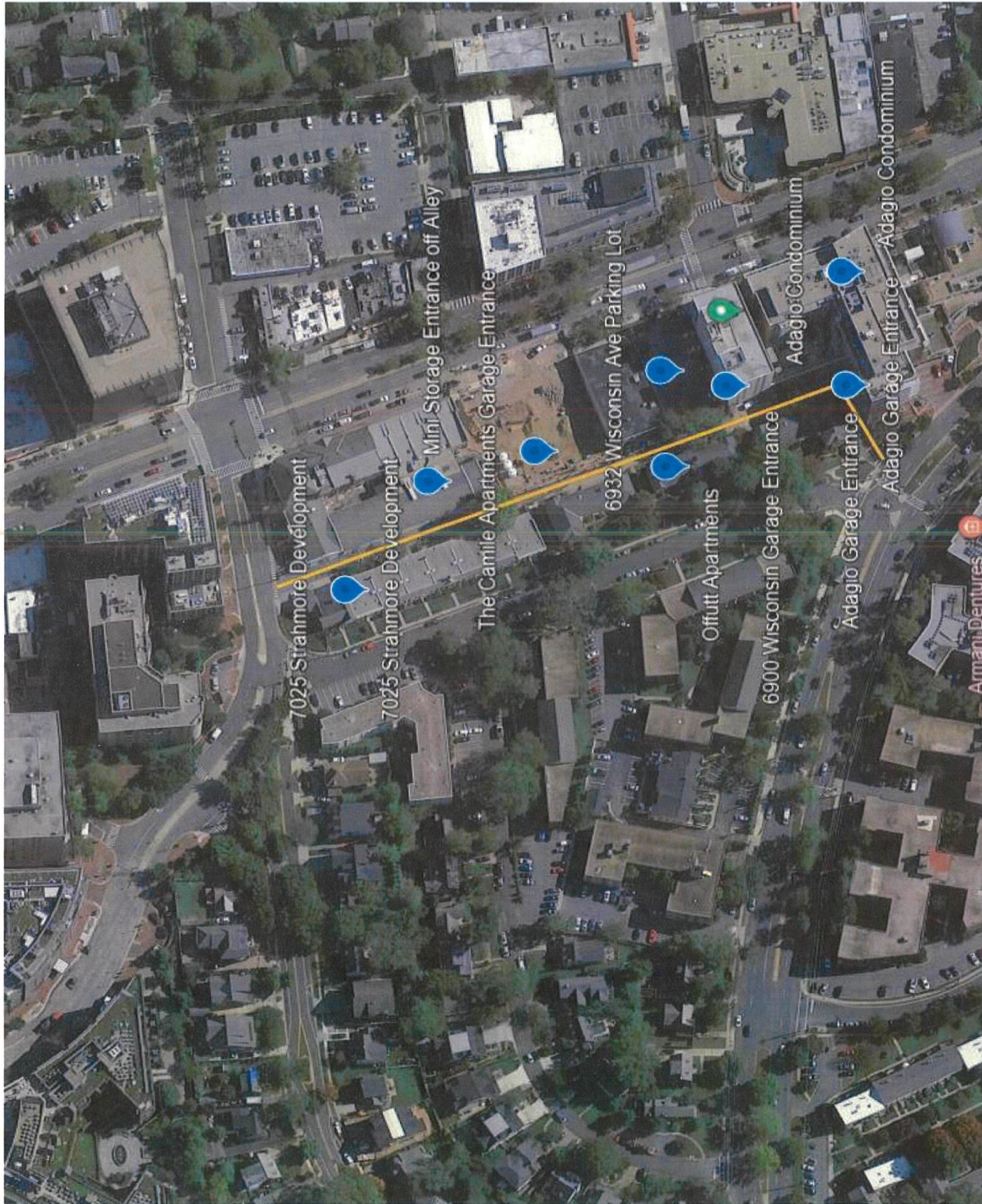


Exhibit B

Pictures of the Service Alley behind Strathmore Street

Alley Entrance at Bradley Boulevard, Strathmore is Street North of the Alley Curb Cut, Adagio to East along Alley



Alley Entrance off of Bradley looking East, Adagio on the South side and the Offutt Apartments to the North side



Adagio Residential Garage Entrance off of Alley



Adagio Residential Garage Entrance to South, Offutt Apartment to the North and Bradley Boulevard Alley Curb Cut to the West



North view up the Alley towards Woodmont Avenue, Offutt Apartments on West side and Adagio and 6900 Wisconsin Avenue on East side



Offutt Apartments on west side of Alley



6900 Wisconsin Avenue Office Building Garage Entrance



North view of alley towards Woodmont Avenue, Offutt Apartments on West Side and 6932 Wisconsin Avenue Parking lot to East side



North View up alley Offutt Apartments to West side and Camille Apartments on East side



North View up alley Offutt Apartments to West side and Camille Apartments on East side



North View up alley Offutt Apartments to West side and Camille Apartments on East side



Camile Apartments Garage and Service Entrance of the alley



View South on the alley, Camile Apartments on the East Side, Offutt Apartments and 7025 Strathmore on West side.



North View of Alley, 7025 Strathmore on West Side and Cube Smart Mini Storage on East Side



North View of Alley, 7025 Strathmore on West Side and Cube Smart Mini Storage on East Side. Per the Sketch Plan the 7025 Garage entrance and service area is almost directly across from this.



7025 Strathmore



Cube Smart Mini Storage directly across from 7025 Strathmore proposed garage/service entrance



North View of Alley, 7025 Strathmore on West Side and Cube Smart Mini Storage on East Side



Alley looking South from Woodmont Avenue, Cube Smart Mini Storage on East side and 7025 Strathmore on West Side



Alley Curb Cut from Woodmont Avenue, 7025 Strathmore on West side and Cube Smart Mini Storage on East side.



Alley looking South from Woodmont Avenue, Cube Smart Mini Storage on East side and 7025 Strathmore on West Side



From: [Scott Bonney](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Strathmore Square Site Plan Apporval
Date: Friday, January 19, 2024 10:07:12 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

I am fully in support of the proposed plans for Strathmore Square being reviewed on January 25, 2023. A very nice project, and the curving facade will create a nice terminated vista for those traveling eastbound on Woodmont Avenue.

I have one question about the proposed bike lane revisions in the area on Woodmont Avenue. I have asked the county several times, with no response, about how long the “temporary” outdoor dining in the public right of way of Woodmont Avenue for Silver will be permitted to remain in place. All other outdoor dining in the streets of downtown Bethesda have been fully removed. Silver has a large sidewalk area in front of their restaurant with dining on both sides of a 5’ wide clear pathway. Yet somehow, Silver is still permitted to have this additional hazardous outdoor dining in the public right-of-way. This condition creates a dangerous situation, having a small number of tables and chairs, and associated awnings and propane heaters, located in the driving lane of eastbound Woodmont Avenue, just east of this project under your review. Combined with the proposed complicated new bike lanes, boulevards, and bike crossing markings, the outdoor dining in the street at Silver creates a confusing and circuitous driving pathway that is a tragedy waiting to happen.

If someone can plow into a Whole Foods, getting all the way to the seafood section, imagine what a SUV would do to a group of folks dining in the street. An eastbound vehicle has already crashed into the lightweight barricades, but luckily, no one was seated in the area at the time.

Why is this dangerous condition allowed to exist at thin one location in downtown? I realize this is not entirely related to Strathmore Square, but is an issue with the bike lane modifications as part of this project.

Thanks for your consideration of this matter.

Scott R Bonney
7170 Woodmont Apt 512
Bethesda, MD 20815
202-557-8837
Zootpix@mac.com

From: [Bogdan, Grace](#)
To: [Derek Hendon](#)
Cc: [Dicke, Stephanie](#); [Hisel-McCoy, Elza](#); [MCP-Chair](#); [Mencarini, Katherine](#)
Subject: RE: Plan number 320240030
Date: Thursday, January 18, 2024 4:22:11 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

Good afternoon Mr. Hendon-

Thank you for your comments, I will forward these to the Planning Board ahead of next Thursday's public hearing. Access to the parking garage and loading is proposed off the public alley, as that is the preferred location per Chapter 59. The Applicant is currently seeking Sketch Plan approval where access locations are proposed but not approved. The Applicant will be required to submit a subsequent Preliminary Plan. During review of the Preliminary Plan, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation has requested the Applicant provide additional analysis including a traffic operational analysis, sight distance for access from the alley, and truck turning movements to determine if access can be approved off the public alley.

I've included a link to the Planning Board's agenda below where you will be able to access the staff report, and the MCDOT letter for the Sketch Plan is included in Attachment B if you wish to review their comments. If you'd like to testify at the Planning Board hearing, there is an icon on the left side of the agenda website to sign up. The deadline to sign up is noon on Wednesday before the Planning Board Hearing (January 24th).

7025 Strathmore Street application materials:

<https://eplans.montgomeryplanning.org/daiclinks/pdoxlinks.aspx?apno=320240030&projname=7025%20Strathmore>

Planning Board agenda: <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda-item/january-25-2024/>

I hope this information is helpful to you and please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Grace



Grace Bogdan (she/her/hers)
Planner III, DownCounty Planning Division
Bethesda Design Advisory Panel (DAP) Coordinator

Montgomery County Planning Department
2425 Reddie Drive, 13th Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902
grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org
o: 301.495.4533



From: Derek Hendon <dhendon@washproperty.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 11:34 AM
To: Bogdan, Grace <grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: Plan number 320240030

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Grace good morning I am writing you in regards to the above noted plan number. This proposed project will have a direct impact on our property known as Wisconsin/Woodmont at 7008-7034 Wisconsin Avenue. The alleyway that separates our two properties now acts as a main road and now provides garage access to the new apartment , The Camille which is over 200 apartment units as well as many properties down Wisconsin Avenue. We recently finished renovating our property adding a CubeSmart self storage with 200 + units and 100% access is through this alleyway. Needless to say this alleyway has gotten a lot more busy and we cant be shut down during the construction of this future project. As owner and manager of 7008-7034 I just need to go on record that this situation needs to be reviewed and maybe the new development has to be built entirely from Strathmore Street. It would be hard to conceive if they also would be using this now busy alleyway for access to their project, loading docks and trash pick ups. Thought should be given to placing these facilities on Strathmore Street. This area is too congested now with the new developments.

Looking forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

Derek Hendon
President
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