

Item 10 - Correspondence

From: [Bruechert, Dan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Hisel-McCoy, Elza](#); [Dickel, Stephanie](#); [Margolies, Atara](#)
Cc: [Ballo, Rebecca](#)
Subject: Historic Preservation - Letter of Support for the Tastee Diner Site Development
Date: Friday, January 26, 2024 10:43:09 AM
Attachments: [HPC Letter to PB - Tastee Diner - Sketch Plan.pdf](#)

All:

Attached is a letter from the Historic Preservation Chair voicing the HPC's support for the redevelopment of the historic Tastee Diner (Master Plan Site #36/13) as part of the larger development project at 8676 Georgia Ave. as the applicant prepares to submit for sketch plan review.

Please feel free to contact me or [Rebecca Ballo](#) with any questions in the meantime.

Thank you,
Dan



Dan Bruechert, LEED-AP | Cultural Resources Planner III | Historic Preservation Section
Countywide Planning and Policy Division | Montgomery County Planning Department | M-NCPPC
2425 Reedie Drive, 13th Floor | Wheaton, MD 20902
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Robert K. Sutton
Chair

January 24, 2024

Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

Dear Chair Harris and Members of the Planning Board,

On August 16, 2023, and again on October 25, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission held Preliminary Consultations on the proposed relocation and redevelopment of the historic Tastee Diner Master Plan Site (#36/13) located at 8601 Cameron St., Silver Spring. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) considered three primary issues at the Preliminary Consultations:

1. Is it appropriate to demolish the non-historic additions to the diner building?
2. Is relocating the diner building consistent with the required guidance?
3. Has the diner building been appropriately integrated into the proposed new building and streetscape?

The HPC supported all three issues and encouraged the applicant to proceed to sketch plan and continue to refine the design.

The HPC's primary objective in the redevelopment of this site is to ensure the Tastee Diner retains as much of its independent appearance and streetscape presence as possible while being effectively integrated into the new construction. While we feel the design for the new construction requires further refinement to ensure the proposed tower does not appear to loom over the small historic building, the HPC supports the proposal and encourages the Planning Board to do the same.

I can be reached through the Historic Preservation Program Supervisor with the Montgomery County Planning Department, Ms. Rebeccah Ballo, if you or the Planning Board have any questions or concerns for the HPC. She can be reached at Rebeccah.Ballo@montgomeryplanning.org or at 301 563-3404. We appreciate your consideration of this matter

Sincerely,

Robert K. Sutton, Chair

From: [Bossi, Adam](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: FW: Written Statement from Cameron Hill Association - 8676 Georgia Avenue Development
Date: Wednesday, July 3, 2024 3:12:31 PM
Attachments: [Letter to Planning Dept.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

Please see below and attached, for the Planning Board's attention relative to Item 10: 8676 Georgia Avenue Sketch and Preliminary Plans on the July 18, 2024, hearing agenda. The letter and email from the neighbors have been shared with the applicant, MCDOT and planning team members.

Adam



Adam Bossi

Planner III, Downcounty Planning Division
Montgomery County Planning Department
2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902
adam.bossi@montgomeryplanning.org
o: 301 495 4529



From: Cara Joson <ca.joson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 3, 2024 12:31 PM
To: Bossi, Adam <Adam.Bossi@montgomeryplanning.org>; Dickel, Stephanie <Stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org>; Mencarini, Katherine <katherine.mencarini@montgomeryplanning.org>
Cc: Lee Turcotte <lee_turcotte@yahoo.com>; Scott Shoreman <scottshoreman@gmail.com>; Pat Kearney <unclejmar@yahoo.com>; Thomas Rosenfield <trosenfield@outlook.com>
Subject: Written Statement from Cameron Hill Association - 8676 Georgia Avenue Development

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

Hi Adam, Stephanie and Katherine,

I hope you've had a wonderful week. We appreciate your team taking some time to speak with us last week and we hope that you can see our concerns more clearly.

As discussed last week, the Committee has put together a letter for you and the Planning Department to submit along with your other findings as it relates to the 8676 Georgia Avenue development. It is our hope that this letter be included in your recommendation to the Planning Board. If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out! Have a great holiday tomorrow.

Best,

Cara

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Cara J Fitzwater, Realtor
Next Move | Nation's Capital Team
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Cameron Hill Owners Association

July 3rd, 2024

Montgomery County Planning Department
ATTN: Adam Bossi
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

To Whom It May Concern:

The Cameron Hill Owners Association, representing 57 townhomes in Cameron Hill Court, is strenuously opposed to the preliminary plan for the proposed development of 8676 Georgia Avenue and 8601 Cameron Street. Our community's safety, livability, and property values are at stake and we respectfully request revisions to address the following concerns:

- 1. Preservation of Ramsey Avenue's Residential Character.** The current plan would transform Ramsey Avenue from a peaceful residential street into an unsafe and unlivable service alley. The proposed development would severely impact all 57 townhomes, since Ramsey provides the only access to the Cameron Hill Court driveway. The unprecedented proximity of commercial loading docks to street-level homes would lead to a significant decline in property values and quality of life for our residents. We know of no comparable example in Silver Spring of loading docks in such a proximity to street-level homes.
- 2. Inequitable Distribution of Benefits and Impacts.** While the preliminary plan focuses all benefits on the east side of Cameron Street between Georgia and Ramsey Avenues, it inequitably shifts all negative consequences onto Ramsey Avenue and the surrounding blocks. The increased commercial traffic creates conflicts and encroaches on bike lanes, disrupting the delicate balance of our neighborhood. Claimed benefits along the proposed building façade on Cameron Street are out of proportion to consequences created in the surrounding area.
- 3. Architectural Incompatibility.** The proposed maximalist building design is starkly incompatible with the existing townhomes and low-rise buildings in our area. The preliminary plan prioritizes maximizing build-out over harmonious integration with the established community, threatening to reshape the skyline and neighborhood character dramatically.

To address these concerns, we request the following modifications:

- Apply a commercial vehicle design limit to exclude tractor-trailer sized trucks
- Include soundproofing of townhouses on Ramsey Avenue as part of the project
- Eliminate on-site retail parking
- Relocate the residential parking garage entrance to Cameron Street
- Relocate and/or redesign loading docks to mitigate impacts on Ramsey Avenue and Cameron Hill Court
- Require a shade/glare analysis of the building, which does not appear to be publicly available
- Provide a detailed recalculation of anticipated daily vehicle traffic on Ramsey Avenue

We want to emphasize that we are not opposed to development in principle. We support the long-term vision for Downtown North outlined in the 2023 Design Guidelines, including mixed-use high-rise

development on Ramsey Avenue and Cameron Street. However, we believe that responsible development must balance progress with the preservation of existing communities.

We urge the Planning Department and Planning Board to support these crucial changes. By doing so, you will demonstrate your commitment to ensuring the continued safety, livability, and vitality of Cameron Hill Court and the surrounding areas in Downtown North Silver Spring. Your decision will have a lasting impact on our community, and we trust that you will prioritize the well-being of current residents alongside future development goals.

RAMSEY AVENUE WILL BE TURNED INTO A SERVICE ALLEY. THE LOADING DOCKS AND PARKING GARAGE ENTRANCE ARE UNTENABLE AS DESIGNED.

At 54 feet wide, Ramsey is the narrowest of any “downtown street Type B” in Silver Spring. This narrow residential street will be transformed into a bustling service alley, unsuitable for its intended purpose and detrimental to its residents.

Incompatibility with Tractor Trailers.

Our first concern is that the loading area is designed to accommodate 70-foot WB-67 tractor-trailers. The plan to accommodate tractor-trailers is not only impractical but dangerous. The proposed maneuvering of these trucks will inevitably block traffic, endanger pedestrians, and cause significant disruptions. The preliminary plan shows a single viable tractor-trailer movement pattern to access the loading dock. The cramped reality of Ramsey Avenue, however, is not conveyed by this and other sterile turning diagrams that only consider large vehicle movements in isolation from all other variables.

The preliminary plan shows the west edge of the loading docks approximately 70 feet from Cameron Street. This is the same length as a WB-67. As proposed, a tractor-trailer will drive west up Ramsey Avenue from Colesville Road, pull halfway across Cameron, then back down Ramsey while turning into the loading docks, swinging the cab into the opposite lane and toward the south curb of Ramsey. In reality, trucks will encroach on that south curb and sidewalk, since the turning diagram leaves no margin for error. Ramsey between Cameron and Fidler will be blocked for the duration of this maneuver, causing delays for westbound vehicles leaving Cameron Hill Court and the proposed parking garage, and delaying traffic on Cameron as vehicles wait to turn east onto Ramsey. Ramsey Avenue is simply not large enough to accommodate WB-67 trucks in any kind of functional or livable way.

In addition to space constraints and traffic blockage, the impact of WB-67 and SU-30 deliveries into the proposed loading docks extend far beyond “inconvenience.” The absence of proper idling zones for delivery vehicles will result in noise pollution, air quality degradation, and continually obstructed traffic. Arriving trucks will have to stage in the street, blocking the street and creating noise from engines as well as backup alarms. The arrival of multiple simultaneous trucks will be disastrous for traffic flow on Ramsey. The Cameron Hill Court driveway will inevitably become an option for backing and standing vehicles. Non-resident use of the driveway is not speculative; we already experience this issue daily from current traffic and commercial activity on Ramsey Avenue. See the picture provided at the end of this letter for a representative example of congestion on Ramsey. The six townhomes on Ramsey will face the most severe value and quality of life impacts, but those consequences will extend to all 57 Cameron Hill townhomes since the entire community depends on the single driveway entrance on Ramsey.

County Transportation Staff Have Voiced Concerns About Truck Movements.

County Transportation staff have acknowledged these concerns in plan review comments, with the following comments being particularly noteworthy:

- "The truck turning movements are not acceptable at this time. *We strongly recommend considering a lower design vehicle or another alternative.*" (emphasis added)
- "The impact of the turning movements needs to be assessed on the existing residential development across the street on Ramsey Ave."

We find these comments reassuring, as they acknowledge the preliminary plan elides the negative consequences for our community.

Yet the developer's documents minimize these crucial issues, sidestepping important design guidelines and zoning ordinances meant to protect residential areas. The June 2023 Local Area Transportation Report (LATR), a 59-page document, includes five short paragraphs addressing "loading facilities" and opens with a blithe assertion that there will be no "detrimental impacts" from loading and deliveries. The transportation report positively frames trucks loading and unloading within enclosed docks but does not consider the realities or problems of limited maneuvering space on Ramsey Avenue.

The preliminary plan Statement of Justification (SOJ) follows suit from the LATR. The SOJ's focus is superficial, addressing garage door materials and finishes in a way apparently tailored to satisfy the architectural requirements of section 2.2.6 of the Design Guidelines. The SOJ sidesteps the functional guidelines of section 2.2.6, such as avoiding placing service areas on residential streets, coordinating access points with confronting properties, and providing spaces to reduce idling in travel lanes. The SOJ also conflicts with zoning ordinance section 6.2.8, "Safe Design," which requires loading spaces to be designed and located to minimize conflicts with other vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. The SOJ provides an idealized architectural view that neglects the array of problems created on Ramsey Avenue.

The Proposal Significantly Underestimates the Traffic Impact.

We are also deeply concerned that the vehicle numbers for commercial deliveries and parking garage use are understated. Only the 2023 LATR specifies a daily number of trucks – eight – anticipated at the loading docks. This estimate does not differentiate between tractor-trailers and smaller box trucks, a crucial clarification for understanding how severe the impact will be to Ramsey Avenue. Eight trucks per day appears unrealistically low for a mixed-use building of this size – the tallest in Silver Spring – especially with grocery retail. This development will likely generate hundreds of additional daily vehicle trips, channeling an excessive amount of traffic onto a small residential street.

Equally troublesome are the vehicle trip generation estimates in the LATR. The trip generation methodology itself is misleading. Diner and bank traffic are subtracted out of net new trips, even though much of that traffic used the existing curb cut on Cameron Street, rather than the proposed garage entrance on Ramsey Avenue. In terms of vehicle numbers, 78 new grocery-related vehicle trips per PM peak hour is implausibly low based on daily traffic and congestion at grocery stores in the Ellsworth and Metro Center districts. If the retail tenant is, in fact, a grocery store, it will be uniquely appealing as one of very few such stores in the area west of Colesville Road, and it likely will draw many hundreds of vehicles per day onto Ramsey Avenue. All this traffic, plus hundreds of peak-hour vehicle trips by new high-rise residents, will be funneled onto a small residential street and into a garage entrance directly opposite the Cameron Hill Court driveway.

Moreover, the plan gives no substantive consideration to the interaction between the number and type of traffic-generating functions it proposes to co-locate. These functions include retail commercial delivery, retail parking, high-rise residential move-in/out, high-rise servicing to include trash and recycling, restaurant drop-off/pickup, and residential access to and from Cameron Hill Court. Present traffic issues on Ramsey will worsen immeasurably with the addition of commercial deliveries and many hundreds of additional daily passenger vehicles.

The Proposal Exploits Ramsey Avenue's Classification in a Red Policy Area.

The transportation report and SOJ address none of the issues described above, in part because Ramsey Avenue is in a Red Policy Area that does not require a Motor Vehicle Adequacy Transportation Study. This loophole allows the developer to avoid accounting for the project's true impact on the community. Planning Department staff met with us several times, which we appreciate, but they repeatedly fell back on the Red Policy Area exception as we expressed our concerns about the impacts the loading docks and increased vehicle traffic on Ramsey Avenue. Their feedback and the review process both strike us as policy-bound, with little or no ability to apply judgment in unique cases. Our townhouses may be unusual within the Silver Spring central business district, but our presence and especially our singular reliance on Ramsey Avenue warrant additional scrutiny through a motor vehicle adequacy transportation study or a similar analysis that will properly consider street-level realities.

There is No Comparable Example in Silver Spring of a Commercial Loading Dock Facing Street-Level Residential Housing.

Planning Department staff were unable to provide such an example. The developer cited City Market, bounded by Seventh and Ninth Streets NW, and O and P Streets NW, in Washington D.C. The purportedly analogous townhouses at 751 P. St NW do not face any loading docks or service areas, and the road network around City Market has longer and wider streets than Ramsey Avenue. City Market is an utterly unrepresentative development to use to justify the proposed changes to Ramsey Avenue.

Perhaps the closest example is on the opposite side of our community: The Metro Plaza loading dock near the Maryland District Court building, on the south side of Second Avenue. Delivery vehicles often park outside that loading dock rather than backing in. When larger vehicles do back into the dock, they block traffic and sometimes bump the median while reversing. Second Avenue is at least a divided road, with more standoff between the loading dock and the confronting townhouses. On Ramsey Avenue, reversing trucks will be within feet of townhouse front doors.

The volume of commercial and retail traffic this project will concentrate into Ramsey Avenue will have a disproportionate and unjustifiable impact on Cameron Hill Court. It is unacceptable that the preliminary plan proposes to bracket our community with loading docks, on a street that is manifestly unsuited for the proposed size and number of additional vehicles.

ALL GAINS ON LIMITED STRETCH OF CAMERON STREET, ALL CONSEQUENCES ON RAMSEY AVENUE.

The Proposal Shifts Traffic Issues Rather Than Resolving Them.

The proposed plan for Cameron Street shifts disproportionate negative impacts onto the surrounding area, particularly Ramsey Avenue. While the County's intent to improve Cameron Street as a pedestrian- and bike-friendly section of the Central Green Loop is commendable, the SOJ implausibly claims to meet all

the County's goals on Cameron Street. Singularly, the SOJ highlights the elimination of the curb cut between Ramsey and Georgia as conforming to four different plans, ordinances, guidelines, or goals. This is all attained by moving the curb cut – in the form of three loading docks and a parking garage entrance – to Ramsey Avenue. This shifts traffic issues rather than resolving them. The preliminary plan ignores the fact that on the same stretch but opposite side of Cameron Street, existing curb cuts for a parking lot and a parking garage will remain. The proposal will result in a sleek building façade, not a complete street.

The Proposal Creates Road Safety Issues that Conflict with Vision Zero.

The excessively narrow focus on the east side of Cameron Street from Ramsey to Georgia creates numerous conflicts with other aspects of the Community Plan, the Design Guidelines, and Vision Zero:

- By design, WB-67 trucks will have to pull across Cameron Street to position themselves to make deliveries, a disruptive and potentially unsafe practice.
- The “viable” outbound WB-67 vehicle route requires a southbound truck on Cameron Street to swing into oncoming traffic 50 feet short of the intersection to make the approved right turn onto Second Avenue. Even by entering oncoming traffic, a truck encroaches on the bike lanes on Second Avenue.
- Further along the outbound route, a WB-67 is expected to turn from Second Avenue onto Spring Street, again by entering the opposing lane short of the intersection. This is already an uncomfortably narrow intersection for passenger vehicles. The narrowness may be by design to limit vehicle speeds and create pedestrian and bicycle space, but those Vision Zero objectives will be undermined by an increase in large commercial vehicles in narrowed, congested traffic lanes.

The claimed benefits of this development are out of proportion to negative effects in the wider area. Four hundred feet of the east side of Cameron Street will have an unbroken bike lane. The rest of Cameron Street and the surrounding area will see increased commercial and passenger vehicle traffic. The addition of regular WB-67 sized trucks to the area will be a danger to pedestrians, bicycles, and passenger vehicles. As designed, this proposal will harm the safety, sustainability, and vitality of Ramsey Avenue, the Cameron Hill Court community, and the surrounding area.

NOT ARCHITECTURALLY COMPATIBLE WITH SURROUNDING BLOCKS, ESPECIALLY CAMERON HILL COURT.

The proposed building form raises significant concerns about its compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, particularly Cameron Hill Court. While the SOJ emphasizes the building’s architectural merits, it fails to address the stark contrast between the proposed structure and existing residential homes.

The development would introduce the tallest building in Silver Spring directly across from some of the area’s lowest rooflines, creating a jarring disparity. The extreme height difference not only disrupts the neighborhood’s aesthetic harmony but also potentially impacts the quality of life for nearby residents. A building that will reshape a city skyline is plainly incompatible with residential homes across the street.

One consequence of such a tall building is potential shade and/or glare effects across Cameron Hill Court. This issue has not been adequately addressed in publicly available documents. This is concerning; we request a light analysis addressing shade and glare as part of the continuing review process.

The proposed four-story step-down from 300 feet on the Ramsey Avenue side is insufficient. The SOJ claims that a four-story step-down “provides a compatible transition to the surrounding development,” meaning the 40-foot-tall roofline of the confronting townhomes on Ramsey Avenue. In the next sentence, the SOJ frames height compatibility in terms the 300-foot zoned height for the Cameron Hill Court block, rather than the actual height of existing townhomes. The proposed development clearly aims to maximize build-out within the zoned 300-foot height limit, rather than to reasonably balance development goals and architectural requirements.

Inconsistent with the County’s Guidelines and Long-Term Plan for Downtown North.

This proposed development fails to meet the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan Design Guidelines’ goal of compatibility, and the proposal disregards the County’s vision for Downtown North. The second of four overall urban design goals in the Design Guidelines is that “New development should be compatible with the urban form and scale of the immediate surrounding neighborhood context.” The Design Guidelines are more specific in reference to Downtown North. Renderings on page 107 show Cameron Street as seen from Tastee Diner, looking south/southwest toward the future First Street extension. The description states the redevelopment of the Cameron Street Parking Garage should be “relative to the scale of the townhomes and low-rise development on the south side of Cameron Street.”

The physical and commercial scales of the proposed project are excessive for the location, particularly given the limitations of Ramsey Avenue. The preliminary plan is short-sighted, standing in contrast to the thoughtful and compelling plan for Downtown North described in the Design Guidelines. Major retail functions are better suited west of Cameron Street as part of redevelopment of the parking garage and the splitting of that “superblock” with the First Avenue extension, which is planned to be a 70-foot-wide type B street. Ramsey Avenue cannot support the scale of proposed development, but the west side of Cameron Street can. A more thoughtful approach for the current proposal would:

- Increase setbacks from Ramsey Avenue
- Implement a substantially greater step-down of the tower facing Ramsey Avenue
- Relocate major retail functions west of Cameron Street, in line with the long-term vision for Downtown North

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Updated estimate of daily truck deliveries at the loading dock, with specific estimates by vehicle type, size, and purpose (grocery store delivery, high-rise resident move-in/out, parcel delivery, building trash service, etc).

Analysis of alternatives for loadings dock siting/configuration, whether for a pull-through loading dock, increased setback, an underground level, or other design possibilities.

Shade and glare analysis of the building as proposed.

REQUESTED CHANGES

Limit retail to businesses that will not require WB-67 trucks. Impose a loading design limitation excluding WB-67 trucks.

Relocate and/or redesign loading docks to mitigate impacts on Ramsey Avenue and Cameron Hill Court

Modify the service entrance design to prevent standing trucks on Ramsey and to accommodate the possibility of multiple arriving trucks.

Require the developer to add soundproofing to the townhouses on Ramsey Avenue. Even without WB-67s, a loading dock on Ramsey fundamentally changes the character of the street, to the detriment of confronting home value and quality of life. Daily commercial vehicle access to loading docks on Ramsey will generate excessive noise warranting remediation through soundproofing.

Eliminate retail parking from the design since a public parking garage is already available across Cameron Street.

Relocate the parking garage entrance to Cameron Street, to ease pressure and congestion on Ramsey Avenue. We recognize this requires compromise on aspects of Vision Zero and the Central Green Loop, but it is essential for Ramsey Avenue to remain functional and livable.

Reduce the overall height of the building facing Ramsey Avenue, to improve architectural compatibility.

CONCLUSION

We met on-site with representatives of the developer to discuss the concerns described in this letter, with particular focus on the impact of the loading docks and parking garage on Ramsey Avenue. Those representatives repeatedly asserted the impossibility of a drive-through loading dock or other design changes to lessen the impact on Ramsey Avenue. They minimized our concerns, largely by citing the presence of a loading dock manager and claiming that turning diagrams are overly conservative. The follow-up ideas they provided after our meeting consisted of signage, pavement markings, and having a towing service on contract for Cameron Hill Court. None of these suggestions engage with our concerns. Signage and road markings are in place but do not resolve the traffic issues we encounter daily. Based on Roadside's lack of responsiveness to our concerns, we look to the Planning Department and Planning Board to moderate the scale of the project and mitigate the negative impacts on Ramsey Avenue, Cameron Hill Court, and Downtown North.

We strongly urge the Planning Board to uphold and implement the long-term vision for Downtown North. By adhering to the original long-term plan and bringing this project into alignment with the existing neighborhood, the Planning Department and Board can mitigate the undesirable consequences of excessive development while preserving a positive vision for Silver Spring – an outcome that serves both the Cameron Hill Court community and the broader goals for Silver Spring's growth. This approach would create a safer, more dynamic, and more livable environment for all residents, balancing progress while preserving the area's unique character.

Respectfully,

The Cameron Hill Owners Association

Representative Ramsey Avenue traffic situation:



Figure 1: White BMW is illegally standing on Ramsey Ave. White Mercedes is illegally standing on Cameron Hill Court. Light gray SUV is standing in front of Mi Rancho. Dark gray Honda Pilot has overtaken and is attempting to park despite no legal spaces. Picture point-of-view is a Cameron Hill Court resident attempting to turn right onto Cameron Hill Court.

From: [Stephanie Helsing](#)
To: [Bossi, Adam](#)
Cc: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce Letter of Support
Date: Monday, July 8, 2024 5:22:17 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Support Roadside Redevelopment Testimony.docx](#)
Importance: High

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

Happy Monday,

Please see the attached letter from the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, in favor of 8676 Georgia Avenue: Sketch Plan No. 320230060 and Preliminary Plan No. 120230150.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

Cheers!

Stephanie Helsing

President & CEO

Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce

8601 Georgia Avenue #203

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Office: (301) 565-3777

Cell: (240) 643-9125

www.gsscc.org

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it has lifted millions out of poverty.***





OUR MISSION:

Working to enhance the economic prosperity of greater Silver Spring through robust promotion of our member businesses and unrelenting advocacy on their behalf.

July 8, 2024

Chairman Artie Harris
Montgomery County Planning Board
And Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

To Whom it May Concern:

For the record, my name is Stephanie Helsing, and I am the President & CEO of the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce. First, I want to state that the Chamber is very excited about the proposed redevelopment of the space at 8676 Georgia Ave. that will allow for the construction of a new mixed-use development that includes the entirety of the historic Tastee Diner. Second, we look forward to the reactivation that will occur with a new restaurant, proposed grocer, and other retail, where there is currently an empty bank building, surface parking lot and the empty Diner.

Silver Spring, like other communities in our County, has faced challenges to its economy brought on by the pandemic and the subsequent changes in our workforce habits. A lack of boots on the ground, the closing of businesses, and the loss of jobs has hurt our local businesses and our general economy. The mission of the Silver Spring Chamber is to widen opportunities by growing jobs and businesses to increase prosperity for all our residents and this type of development is what Silver Spring needs to make this happen. It provides the economic development piece and the residential that is desperately needed.

A major challenge we continue to face is the high vacancy rate in our downtown office markets. Attracting new companies and fostering business expansion for our existing companies is vitally important and projects like this, with companies like Roadside, with a reputation for excellence and quality, as seen by their local developments like City Ridge and O in DC, will help jumpstart the local economy in Silver Spring with new jobs people can walk to, in a highly supported, inclusive and diverse working environment, will help revitalize our downtown, particularly around the former Discovery building, as well as provide much needed housing, including 79 MPDU's.

This redevelopment fits into the Silver Spring Sector plan and helps achieve the County's goal of growing our employment base in an equity focus area. - a geographic area that merits increasing focus on economic opportunity. As one of the County's Equity Focus areas, this project benefits Silver Spring by giving a boost to our small businesses and enticing entrepreneurs and innovators to call Silver Spring home with its proximity to the metro and the uninterrupted green loop, bike lane and pedestrian environment along Cameron Street. The Chamber also appreciates that Georgia Avenue is planned for retail access to help activate that frontage there and see this project as a catalyst for further development and reinvestment in the area.

In closing, the Chamber wholeheartedly supports the redevelopment of the former Capital One Bank, Tastee Diner and surface parking lot location into a thoughtful mixed-use space that will enhance the immediate area and spur increased reinvestment in Silver Spring.

Should you have questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie M. Helsing".

Stephanie Helsing
President & CEO

From: [Andrew Lewis](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Written Comment re Proposed Development of 8676 Georgia Ave.
Date: Wednesday, July 10, 2024 11:38:34 AM
Attachments: [Re Proposed development of 8676 Georgia Avenue and 8601 Cameron Street.pdf](#)

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

To the Honorable Montgomery County Planning Board:

Please find attached written commentary on the proposed development of 8676 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring.

Very Respectfully,

William Andrew Lewis
1315 Cameron Hill Court
Silver Spring, MD 20910

July 10, 2024

William Andrew Lewis
1315 Cameron Hill Court
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Montgomery County Planning Board
MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

To the Honorable Montgomery County Planning Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed development of 8676 Georgia Avenue and 8601 Cameron Street (the "Proposed Development"). I appreciate the Board's willingness to consider how proposed developments will impact the residents of Montgomery County.

In short: I respectfully request that the Board require revisions to the Proposed Development that reflect the actual traffic and loading capacity of the surrounding streets.

The streets and neighborhood surrounding the Proposed Development cannot accommodate its proposed uses. I defer to the Board's good judgment as to how this should be addressed. At minimum, I urge the Board to ensure that tractor-trailer sized trucks will be excluded from the streets surrounding the Proposed Development. I hope that the Board will also work with the developers to shift the Proposed Development's access points away from Ramsey Avenue.

I respectfully urge the Board to carefully consider the July 3 comment letter submitted by the Cameron Hill Owners Association to the Montgomery County Planning Division. That letter succinctly explains that Ramsey Avenue cannot accommodate the commercial traffic that the Proposed Development would require. As a result, the Proposed Development would have substantial negative impacts on access to the only entrance to the Cameron Hill community.

I share the Board's vision of a lively and thriving community in downtown Silver Spring. But the Board cannot fulfill that vision if it does not require development proposals to reflect the actual capacity of their surrounding streets and neighborhood.

Very Respectfully,

/s/

William Andrew Lewis

From: [Jane Lyons-Raeder](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Support for 8676 Georgia Avenue, Sketch Plan 320230060, Preliminary Plan No. 120230150
Date: Friday, July 12, 2024 12:30:44 PM

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

Good afternoon,

I am writing to you in strong support for the sketch plan/preliminary plan application for 8676 Georgia Avenue. I have lived near the project site in downtown Silver Spring for five years and have seen how projects like this inject the community with new energy, new neighbors, and new investment. This major project will be one of the first to begin implementing the vision of the recent Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan, which the Planning Board should be proud of.

Importantly, this project would bring 79 moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs). In a place like downtown Silver Spring, we should be maximizing projects as much as possible so that we can get as many new MPDUs as possible.

A project like this exemplifies the type of growth in walkable, urban places that Montgomery County needs more of. I'm excited that it's happening in my neighborhood! Please support the sketch plan and preliminary plan applications for 8676 Georgia Avenue.

Thanks,
Jane

--

Jane Lyons-Raeder
(410) 474-0741
janeplyons@gmail.com

From: [Lee Turcotte](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Cara Joson](#)
Subject: Written Comments for 18 July Meeting, Item 10 (8676 Georgia Ave)
Date: Monday, July 15, 2024 8:54:10 PM
Attachments: [Written Comments for Planning Board.pdf](#)

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

Hello,

On behalf of the Cameron Hill Owners Association, please find attached written comments regarding Item 10 on the 18 July 2024 Planning Board meeting agenda. The Cameron Hill Owners Association has authorized the substance of the attached letter, and of the testimony I intend to provide on their behalf on Thursday.

Respectfully,

Lee Turcotte

From: [Lee Turcotte](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Mailing address for Written Comments for 18 July Meeting, Item 10 (8676 Georgia Ave)
Date: Monday, July 15, 2024 8:59:55 PM

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

Hello,

My previous email with written comments did not include a mailing address. The address is 8511 Cameron St, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Respectfully,

Lee Turcotte

On Monday, July 15, 2024 at 08:54:13 PM EDT, MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Thank you for contacting the Planning Board Chair's Office. This confirms receipt of your message for distribution to appropriate staff to review. If you have submitted an inquiry, we will respond in a timely manner. You may also leave a voice message at (301) 495-4605 and a staff member will return your call.

If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. If this was not already included, please reply to this email with that information. Written testimony submitted before the deadline of 12pm, two business days before the scheduled Planning Board meeting, will be distributed to the Board and staff and included in the public record. Written testimony received after the deadline will only be distributed to staff to review.

For more information about the Chair's Office, please visit: <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/>

Cameron Hill Owners Association

July 15th, 2024

Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

To Whom It May Concern:

The Cameron Hill Owners Association, representing 57 townhomes in Cameron Hill Court, is strenuously opposed to the preliminary plan for the proposed development of 8676 Georgia Avenue and 8601 Cameron Street. Our community's safety, livability, and property values are at stake and we respectfully request revisions to address the following concerns:

- 1. Preservation of Ramsey Avenue's Residential Character.** The current plan would transform Ramsey Avenue from a peaceful residential street into an unsafe and unlivable service alley. The proposed development would severely impact all 57 townhomes, since Ramsey provides the only access to the Cameron Hill Court driveway. The unprecedented proximity of commercial loading docks to street-level homes would lead to a significant decline in property values and quality of life for our residents. We know of no comparable example in Silver Spring of loading docks in such a proximity to street-level homes.
- 2. Inequitable Distribution of Benefits and Impacts.** While the preliminary plan focuses all benefits on the east side of Cameron Street between Georgia and Ramsey Avenues, it inequitably shifts all negative consequences onto Ramsey Avenue and the surrounding blocks. The increased commercial traffic creates conflicts and encroaches on bike lanes, disrupting the delicate balance of our neighborhood. Claimed benefits along the proposed building façade on Cameron Street are out of proportion to consequences created in the surrounding area.
- 3. Architectural Incompatibility.** The proposed maximalist building design is starkly incompatible with the existing townhomes and low-rise buildings in our area. The preliminary plan prioritizes maximizing build-out over harmonious integration with the established community, threatening to reshape the skyline and neighborhood character dramatically.

To address these concerns, we request the following modifications:

- Apply a commercial vehicle design limit to exclude tractor-trailer sized trucks
- Include soundproofing of townhouses on Ramsey Avenue as part of the project
- Eliminate on-site retail parking
- Relocate the residential parking garage entrance to Cameron Street
- Relocate and/or redesign loading docks to mitigate impacts on Ramsey Avenue and Cameron Hill Court
- Require a shade/glare analysis of the building, which does not appear to be publicly available
- Provide a detailed recalculation of anticipated daily vehicle traffic on Ramsey Avenue

We want to emphasize that we are not opposed to development in principle. We support the long-term vision for Downtown North outlined in the 2023 Design Guidelines, including mixed-use high-rise

development on Ramsey Avenue and Cameron Street. However, we believe that responsible development must balance progress with the preservation of existing communities.

We urge the Planning Department and Planning Board to support these crucial changes. By doing so, you will demonstrate your commitment to ensuring the continued safety, livability, and vitality of Cameron Hill Court and the surrounding areas in Downtown North Silver Spring. Your decision will have a lasting impact on our community, and we trust that you will prioritize the well-being of current residents alongside future development goals.

RAMSEY AVENUE WILL BE TURNED INTO A SERVICE ALLEY. THE LOADING DOCKS AND PARKING GARAGE ENTRANCE ARE UNTENABLE AS DESIGNED.

At 54 feet wide, Ramsey is the narrowest of any “downtown street Type B” in Silver Spring. This narrow residential street will be transformed into a bustling service alley, unsuitable for its intended purpose and detrimental to its residents.

Incompatibility with Tractor Trailers.

Our first concern is that the loading area is designed to accommodate 70-foot WB-67 tractor-trailers. The plan to accommodate tractor-trailers is not only impractical but dangerous. The proposed maneuvering of these trucks will inevitably block traffic, endanger pedestrians, and cause significant disruptions. The preliminary plan shows a single viable tractor-trailer movement pattern to access the loading dock. The cramped reality of Ramsey Avenue, however, is not conveyed by this and other sterile turning diagrams that only consider large vehicle movements in isolation from all other variables.

The preliminary plan shows the west edge of the loading docks approximately 70 feet from Cameron Street. This is the same length as a WB-67. As proposed, a tractor-trailer will drive west up Ramsey Avenue from Colesville Road, pull halfway across Cameron, then back down Ramsey while turning into the loading docks, swinging the cab into the opposite lane and toward the south curb of Ramsey. In reality, trucks will encroach on that south curb and sidewalk, since the turning diagram leaves no margin for error. Ramsey between Cameron and Fidler will be blocked for the duration of this maneuver, causing delays for westbound vehicles leaving Cameron Hill Court and the proposed parking garage, and delaying traffic on Cameron as vehicles wait to turn east onto Ramsey. Ramsey Avenue is simply not large enough to accommodate WB-67 trucks in any kind of functional or livable way.

In addition to space constraints and traffic blockage, the impact of WB-67 and SU-30 deliveries into the proposed loading docks extend far beyond “inconvenience.” The absence of proper idling zones for delivery vehicles will result in noise pollution, air quality degradation, and continually obstructed traffic. Arriving trucks will have to stage in the street, blocking the street and creating noise from engines as well as backup alarms. The arrival of multiple simultaneous trucks will be disastrous for traffic flow on Ramsey. The Cameron Hill Court driveway will inevitably become an option for backing and standing vehicles. Non-resident use of the driveway is not speculative; we already experience this issue daily from current traffic and commercial activity on Ramsey Avenue. See the picture provided at the end of this letter for a representative example of congestion on Ramsey. The six townhomes on Ramsey will face the most severe value and quality of life impacts, but those consequences will extend to all 57 Cameron Hill townhomes since the entire community depends on the single driveway entrance on Ramsey.

County Transportation Staff Have Voiced Concerns About Truck Movements.

County Transportation staff have acknowledged these concerns in plan review comments, with the following comments being particularly noteworthy:

- "The truck turning movements are not acceptable at this time. *We strongly recommend considering a lower design vehicle or another alternative.*" (emphasis added)
- "The impact of the turning movements needs to be assessed on the existing residential development across the street on Ramsey Ave."

We find these comments reassuring, as they acknowledge the preliminary plan elides the negative consequences for our community.

Yet the developer's documents minimize these crucial issues, sidestepping important design guidelines and zoning ordinances meant to protect residential areas. The June 2023 Local Area Transportation Report (LATR), a 59-page document, includes five short paragraphs addressing "loading facilities" and opens with a blithe assertion that there will be no "detrimental impacts" from loading and deliveries. The transportation report positively frames trucks loading and unloading within enclosed docks but does not consider the realities or problems of limited maneuvering space on Ramsey Avenue.

The preliminary plan Statement of Justification (SOJ) follows suit from the LATR. The SOJ's focus is superficial, addressing garage door materials and finishes in a way apparently tailored to satisfy the architectural requirements of section 2.2.6 of the Design Guidelines. The SOJ sidesteps the functional guidelines of section 2.2.6, such as avoiding placing service areas on residential streets, coordinating access points with confronting properties, and providing spaces to reduce idling in travel lanes. The SOJ also conflicts with zoning ordinance section 6.2.8, "Safe Design," which requires loading spaces to be designed and located to minimize conflicts with other vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. The SOJ provides an idealized architectural view that neglects the array of problems created on Ramsey Avenue.

The Proposal Significantly Underestimates the Traffic Impact.

We are also deeply concerned that the vehicle numbers for commercial deliveries and parking garage use are understated. Only the 2023 LATR specifies a daily number of trucks – eight – anticipated at the loading docks. This estimate does not differentiate between tractor-trailers and smaller box trucks, a crucial clarification for understanding how severe the impact will be to Ramsey Avenue. Eight trucks per day appears unrealistically low for a mixed-use building of this size – the tallest in Silver Spring – especially with grocery retail. This development will likely generate hundreds of additional daily vehicle trips, channeling an excessive amount of traffic onto a small residential street.

Equally troublesome are the vehicle trip generation estimates in the LATR. The trip generation methodology itself is misleading. Diner and bank traffic are subtracted out of net new trips, even though much of that traffic used the existing curb cut on Cameron Street, rather than the proposed garage entrance on Ramsey Avenue. In terms of vehicle numbers, 78 new grocery-related vehicle trips per PM peak hour is implausibly low based on daily traffic and congestion at grocery stores in the Ellsworth and Metro Center districts. If the retail tenant is, in fact, a grocery store, it will be uniquely appealing as one of very few such stores in the area west of Colesville Road, and it likely will draw many hundreds of vehicles per day onto Ramsey Avenue. All this traffic, plus hundreds of peak-hour vehicle trips by new high-rise residents, will be funneled onto a small residential street and into a garage entrance directly opposite the Cameron Hill Court driveway.

Moreover, the plan gives no substantive consideration to the interaction between the number and type of traffic-generating functions it proposes to co-locate. These functions include retail commercial delivery, retail parking, high-rise residential move-in/out, high-rise servicing to include trash and recycling, restaurant drop-off/pickup, and residential access to and from Cameron Hill Court. Present traffic issues on Ramsey will worsen immeasurably with the addition of commercial deliveries and many hundreds of additional daily passenger vehicles.

The Proposal Exploits Ramsey Avenue's Classification in a Red Policy Area.

The transportation report and SOJ address none of the issues described above, in part because Ramsey Avenue is in a Red Policy Area that does not require a Motor Vehicle Adequacy Transportation Study. This loophole allows the developer to avoid accounting for the project's true impact on the community. Planning Department staff met with us several times, which we appreciate, but they repeatedly fell back on the Red Policy Area exception as we expressed our concerns about the impacts the loading docks and increased vehicle traffic on Ramsey Avenue. Their feedback and the review process both strike us as policy-bound, with little or no ability to apply judgment in unique cases. Our townhouses may be unusual within the Silver Spring central business district, but our presence and especially our singular reliance on Ramsey Avenue warrant additional scrutiny through a motor vehicle adequacy transportation study or a similar analysis that will properly consider street-level realities.

There is No Comparable Example in Silver Spring of a Commercial Loading Dock Facing Street-Level Residential Housing.

Planning Department staff were unable to provide such an example. The developer cited City Market, bounded by Seventh and Ninth Streets NW, and O and P Streets NW, in Washington D.C. The purportedly analogous townhouses at 751 P. St NW do not face any loading docks or service areas, and the road network around City Market has longer and wider streets than Ramsey Avenue. City Market is an utterly unrepresentative development to use to justify the proposed changes to Ramsey Avenue.

Perhaps the closest example is on the opposite side of our community: The Metro Plaza loading dock near the Maryland District Court building, on the south side of Second Avenue. Delivery vehicles often park outside that loading dock rather than backing in. When larger vehicles do back into the dock, they block traffic and sometimes bump the median while reversing. Second Avenue is at least a divided road, with more standoff between the loading dock and the confronting townhouses. On Ramsey Avenue, reversing trucks will be within feet of townhouse front doors.

The volume of commercial and retail traffic this project will concentrate into Ramsey Avenue will have a disproportionate and unjustifiable impact on Cameron Hill Court. It is unacceptable that the preliminary plan proposes to bracket our community with loading docks, on a street that is manifestly unsuited for the proposed size and number of additional vehicles.

ALL GAINS ON LIMITED STRETCH OF CAMERON STREET, ALL CONSEQUENCES ON RAMSEY AVENUE.

The Proposal Shifts Traffic Issues Rather Than Resolving Them.

The proposed plan for Cameron Street shifts disproportionate negative impacts onto the surrounding area, particularly Ramsey Avenue. While the County's intent to improve Cameron Street as a pedestrian- and bike-friendly section of the Central Green Loop is commendable, the SOJ implausibly claims to meet all

the County's goals on Cameron Street. Singularly, the SOJ highlights the elimination of the curb cut between Ramsey and Georgia as conforming to four different plans, ordinances, guidelines, or goals. This is all attained by moving the curb cut – in the form of three loading docks and a parking garage entrance – to Ramsey Avenue. This shifts traffic issues rather than resolving them. The preliminary plan ignores the fact that on the same stretch but opposite side of Cameron Street, existing curb cuts for a parking lot and a parking garage will remain. The proposal will result in a sleek building façade, not a complete street.

The Proposal Creates Road Safety Issues that Conflict with Vision Zero.

The excessively narrow focus on the east side of Cameron Street from Ramsey to Georgia creates numerous conflicts with other aspects of the Community Plan, the Design Guidelines, and Vision Zero:

- By design, WB-67 trucks will have to pull across Cameron Street to position themselves to make deliveries, a disruptive and potentially unsafe practice.
- The “viable” outbound WB-67 vehicle route requires a southbound truck on Cameron Street to swing into oncoming traffic 50 feet short of the intersection to make the approved right turn onto Second Avenue. Even by entering oncoming traffic, a truck encroaches on the bike lanes on Second Avenue.
- Further along the outbound route, a WB-67 is expected to turn from Second Avenue onto Spring Street, again by entering the opposing lane short of the intersection. This is already an uncomfortably narrow intersection for passenger vehicles. The narrowness may be by design to limit vehicle speeds and create pedestrian and bicycle space, but those Vision Zero objectives will be undermined by an increase in large commercial vehicles in narrowed, congested traffic lanes.

The claimed benefits of this development are out of proportion to negative effects in the wider area. Four hundred feet of the east side of Cameron Street will have an unbroken bike lane. The rest of Cameron Street and the surrounding area will see increased commercial and passenger vehicle traffic. The addition of regular WB-67 sized trucks to the area will be a danger to pedestrians, bicycles, and passenger vehicles. As designed, this proposal will harm the safety, sustainability, and vitality of Ramsey Avenue, the Cameron Hill Court community, and the surrounding area.

NOT ARCHITECTURALLY COMPATIBLE WITH SURROUNDING BLOCKS, ESPECIALLY CAMERON HILL COURT.

The proposed building form raises significant concerns about its compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, particularly Cameron Hill Court. While the SOJ emphasizes the building’s architectural merits, it fails to address the stark contrast between the proposed structure and existing residential homes.

The development would introduce the tallest building in Silver Spring directly across from some of the area’s lowest rooflines, creating a jarring disparity. The extreme height difference not only disrupts the neighborhood’s aesthetic harmony but also potentially impacts the quality of life for nearby residents. A building that will reshape a city skyline is plainly incompatible with residential homes across the street.

One consequence of such a tall building is potential shade and/or glare effects across Cameron Hill Court. This issue has not been adequately addressed in publicly available documents. This is concerning; we request a light analysis addressing shade and glare as part of the continuing review process.

The proposed four-story step-down from 300 feet on the Ramsey Avenue side is insufficient. The SOJ claims that a four-story step-down “provides a compatible transition to the surrounding development,” meaning the 40-foot-tall roofline of the confronting townhomes on Ramsey Avenue. In the next sentence, the SOJ frames height compatibility in terms the 300-foot zoned height for the Cameron Hill Court block, rather than the actual height of existing townhomes. The proposed development clearly aims to maximize build-out within the zoned 300-foot height limit, rather than to reasonably balance development goals and architectural requirements.

Inconsistent with the County’s Guidelines and Long-Term Plan for Downtown North.

This proposed development fails to meet the Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan Design Guidelines’ goal of compatibility, and the proposal disregards the County’s vision for Downtown North. The second of four overall urban design goals in the Design Guidelines is that “New development should be compatible with the urban form and scale of the immediate surrounding neighborhood context.” The Design Guidelines are more specific in reference to Downtown North. Renderings on page 107 show Cameron Street as seen from Tastee Diner, looking south/southwest toward the future First Street extension. The description states the redevelopment of the Cameron Street Parking Garage should be “relative to the scale of the townhomes and low-rise development on the south side of Cameron Street.”

The physical and commercial scales of the proposed project are excessive for the location, particularly given the limitations of Ramsey Avenue. The preliminary plan is short-sighted, standing in contrast to the thoughtful and compelling plan for Downtown North described in the Design Guidelines. Major retail functions are better suited west of Cameron Street as part of redevelopment of the parking garage and the splitting of that “superblock” with the First Avenue extension, which is planned to be a 70-foot-wide type B street. Ramsey Avenue cannot support the scale of proposed development, but the west side of Cameron Street can. A more thoughtful approach for the current proposal would:

- Increase setbacks from Ramsey Avenue
- Implement a substantially greater step-down of the tower facing Ramsey Avenue
- Relocate major retail functions west of Cameron Street, in line with the long-term vision for Downtown North

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Updated estimate of daily truck deliveries at the loading dock, with specific estimates by vehicle type, size, and purpose (grocery store delivery, high-rise resident move-in/out, parcel delivery, building trash service, etc).

Analysis of alternatives for loadings dock siting/configuration, whether for a pull-through loading dock, increased setback, an underground level, or other design possibilities.

Shade and glare analysis of the building as proposed.

REQUESTED CHANGES

Limit retail to businesses that will not require WB-67 trucks. Impose a loading design limitation excluding WB-67 trucks.

Relocate and/or redesign loading docks to mitigate impacts on Ramsey Avenue and Cameron Hill Court

Modify the service entrance design to prevent standing trucks on Ramsey and to accommodate the possibility of multiple arriving trucks.

Require the developer to add soundproofing to the townhouses on Ramsey Avenue. Even without WB-67s, a loading dock on Ramsey fundamentally changes the character of the street, to the detriment of confronting home value and quality of life. Daily commercial vehicle access to loading docks on Ramsey will generate excessive noise warranting remediation through soundproofing.

Eliminate retail parking from the design since a public parking garage is already available across Cameron Street.

Relocate the parking garage entrance to Cameron Street, to ease pressure and congestion on Ramsey Avenue. We recognize this requires compromise on aspects of Vision Zero and the Central Green Loop, but it is essential for Ramsey Avenue to remain functional and livable.

Reduce the overall height of the building facing Ramsey Avenue, to improve architectural compatibility.

CONCLUSION

We met on-site with representatives of the developer to discuss the concerns described in this letter, with particular focus on the impact of the loading docks and parking garage on Ramsey Avenue. Those representatives repeatedly asserted the impossibility of a drive-through loading dock or other design changes to lessen the impact on Ramsey Avenue. They minimized our concerns, largely by citing the presence of a loading dock manager and claiming that turning diagrams are overly conservative. The follow-up ideas they provided after our meeting consisted of signage, pavement markings, and having a towing service on contract for Cameron Hill Court. None of these suggestions engage with our concerns. Signage and road markings are in place but do not resolve the traffic issues we encounter daily. Based on Roadside's lack of responsiveness to our concerns, we look to the Planning Department and Planning Board to moderate the scale of the project and mitigate the negative impacts on Ramsey Avenue, Cameron Hill Court, and Downtown North.

We strongly urge the Planning Board to uphold and implement the long-term vision for Downtown North. By adhering to the original long-term plan and bringing this project into alignment with the existing neighborhood, the Planning Department and Board can mitigate the undesirable consequences of excessive development while preserving a positive vision for Silver Spring – an outcome that serves both the Cameron Hill Court community and the broader goals for Silver Spring's growth. This approach would create a safer, more dynamic, and more livable environment for all residents, balancing progress while preserving the area's unique character.

Respectfully,

The Cameron Hill Owners Association

Representative Ramsey Avenue traffic situation:



Figure 1: White BMW is illegally standing on Ramsey Ave. White Mercedes is illegally standing on Cameron Hill Court. Light gray SUV is standing in front of Mi Rancho. Dark gray Honda Pilot has overtaken and is attempting to park despite no legal spaces. Picture point-of-view is a Cameron Hill Court resident attempting to turn right onto Cameron Hill Court.

From: [Eileen McGuckian](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for Planning Board agenda item #10, July 18, 2024, Tastee Diner
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 10:01:26 AM
Attachments: [MPI Tastee Diner written testimony.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chairman Harris and Planning Board Members,

Attached find testimony for your hearing record from Montgomery Preservation, Inc. on Planning Board agenda item #10 for Thursday's meeting on July 18. We appreciate your consideration.

MPI wishes you a good meeting and cooler weather this summer,

Eileen McGuckian, President
Montgomery Preservation, Inc. (MPI)
phileen3@verizon.net
301-801-3128



Montgomery Preservation Inc.

Promoting the Preservation, Protection and Enjoyment of Montgomery County's
Rich Architectural Heritage and Historic Landscapes
P.O. Box 4661, Rockville, MD 20849 www.montgomerypreservation.org

Memorandum July 16, 2024, to: Montgomery County Planning Board
Re: Tastee Diner, 36/13, for hearing record of item #10 on Planning Board agenda, July 18, 2024
From: Montgomery Preservation, Inc. via email from Eileen McGuckian, President

To Chairman Harris and Planning Board members:

Montgomery Preservation (MPI) writes with concern about the proposal to redevelop this centrally-located historic property in Silver Spring. Development of the Tastee Diner site is a challenge at all levels, and it is difficult to totally approve of a new structure that will so dominate Silver Spring in terms of height and massing.

While MPI supports redevelopment for needed housing, and we appreciate the developer's desire to take full advantage of the vast amount of density allowable at this location, we are deeply concerned that the project as currently designed continues to overwhelm an iconic, significant historic resource that was designated on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation thirty years ago.

Important here is the need to retain visibility of the Tastee Diner as an independent building that stands out as an emblem of Silver Spring's history and development. This will not be sufficiently honored until more creative effort is made. The currently proposed overhang does not provide either adequate interpretation or visibility for this historic site. Closer attention to traditional signage – both outside and in – must be required to provide basic continuity between history and the new use.

MPI believes it important to take a strong preservation position or this history will be forever lost. With citizens and neighbors in Silver Spring and beyond, we look to the Planning Board to uphold the standards described in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation that have been followed for the past four decades. Tastee Diner was designated with the intent of continuing preservation of the structure and its environment with visual accessibility by the public. Your decision will guide the future of this designated historic resource.

MPI compliments the developer and totally supports restoration of three sides of the Tastee Diner façade, with its roof and canopy. We urge the Planning Board to protect elements of the diner by requiring retention of as much of Tastee Diner's presence in its Mid-century Modern streetscape as possible. New development in the Silver Spring streetscape that expresses pride in our community's history and architecture will prove a welcome addition to Montgomery County.

Thank you for the important work that you do in Montgomery County and for your consideration of these points. MPI looks forward to continuing to follow the future of Silver Spring's Tastee Diner.

Sincerely,

Eileen McGuckian, President
Montgomery Preservation, Inc.
Phileen3@verizon.net
301-801-3128

From: [Tina Slater](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony - July 18, Item 10 - 8676 Georgia Ave Sketch Plan
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 10:39:14 AM

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

Dear Chair Harris and Commissioners:

I am submitting comments (Favorable) for your July 18 Hearing, regarding **ITEM 10 - 8676 Georgia Ave, Sketch Plan 320230060, Preliminary Plan No. 120230150**

I am excited for the proposed Roadside Development project to add 525 units of housing, including 79 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units, on the former site of the Tastee Diner (8676 Georgia and 8601 Cameron.)

We have not built enough housing in Montgomery County to keep up with demand, and five Hundred-plus units (with 15% ADUs) will be a much needed boost to this situation. Plus it is located a few blocks from the SS Metro, a MARC station, and the future Purple Line Station. People will be able to live there comfortably (without needing to own a car) and have access to downtown shopping, the future Green Trail, the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the Capital Crescent Trail.

Regarding comments about "scale" --- the building will be nestled in with other tall buildings, so I don't think the "scale" of the proposed building is out of line with anything except the smallish townhome development next door. (Aside: why "townhomes" were built across from a major Metro Transit Center is a bit of a mystery to me....)

I do hope you approve this project and allow it to move forward.

Thank you,
Tina Slater
402 Mansfield Rd
Silver Spring MD 20910-5515
301-585-5038

From: [Mike English](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Support for Roadside Development Georgia Avenue Project
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 10:48:14 AM

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

Hello Members of the Planning Board

I am writing to you to convey my strong support for Roadside Development's project to build over 500 homes, including 79 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units, on the former site of the Tastee Diner and bank site in downtown Silver Spring

I live in downtown Silver Spring, and this project is exactly the kind of thing we need to address our housing crisis, providing hundreds of homes near not only the metro, but the largest bus hub in our region, and one of two future downtown Silver Spring Purple Line Stations. The project will help build not only walkable homes but a walkable amenity in the form of a grocery store, builds on currently vacant land that makes it a perfect site for more people to live and for the county to collect more tax revenue, and it fits in well with the allowed height (300 feet) of the Silver Spring Downtown plan that passed a few years ago. Roadside also has a history of incorporating historic designs and elements into their projects, so this is hardly the first time they have attempted something like this.

Further, while I understand that some neighbors are concerned about loading and unloading of trucks, and the traffic that will bring, all loading and unloading will be done on loading docks and not in the street, which should mitigate most of the impacts here. Moreover, and I cannot stress this enough, downtown Silver Spring is a city for all intents and purposes, people live in homes that changed the landscape when they were built, and they do not get to freeze their neighborhood in amber to prevent new homes, just like people who lived there before them shouldn't have been able to prevent their own homes from being built. I couldn't make up a better location for this many homes in the county, and the developer is making every effort to accommodate existing residents as is practicable. If this doesn't pass the threshold for approval, I can't imagine what possibly could, and that's not a road we want to start going down.

If all that is not enough, the project is also providing the space for the planned green street with protected bike lanes, providing more amenities for the community, and expanding transportation for options, all of which will help bring vibrancy to a block of downtown Silver Spring that is largely, at this point in time, shuttered.

This project is good for the existing community, for the county, and for the people who will live there.

Please approve it

Mike English

8005 13th Street,
Unit 304
Silver Spring, MD
20910

From: [Don Slater](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony - July 18, Item 10 - 8676 Georgia Ave Sketch Plan
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 11:04:37 AM

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

Dear Chair Harris and Commissioners:

I am submitting comments (Favorable) for your July 18 Hearing, regarding ITEM 10 - 8676 Georgia Ave, Sketch Plan 320230060, Preliminary Plan No. 120230150

I am pleased to support the proposed Roadside Development project to add 525 units of housing, including 79 Moderately Priced Dwelling Units at 8676 Georgia and 8601 Cameron.

Montgomery County housing construction continues to trail demand, and five hundred-plus units (including 15% ADUs) will be a much-needed improvement to this situation. As it is located a few blocks from the Silver Spring Transit Center (MetroBus, MetroRail, MARC, RideOn, and the Purple Line), people will be able to live there comfortably without needing to own a car and have access to downtown shopping, the future Green Trail, the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the Capital Crescent Trail.

Regarding comments about "scale" --- the building will be nestled in with other tall buildings, so I don't think the "scale" of the proposed building is out of line with anything except the smallish townhome development next door and the plan does make allowances for the height disparity.

I do hope you approve this project and allow it to move forward.

Thank you,
Don Slater
402 Mansfield Rd
Silver Spring MD 20910-5515
301-585-5038

Don Slater Silver Spring, MD USA
slater402@gmail.com +1.301.641.2925 (m)

From: dchalfie@adsw.org
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Steve Knight](#); [Ballo, Rebecca](#)
Subject: Written statement of Art Deco Society of Washington re: 8676 Georgia Ave. Sketch Plan and Preliminary Plan
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 11:41:48 AM
Attachments: [ADSW stmt re Tastee Diner, PB 7-18-24.pdf](#)

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

Artie Harris, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear Chairman Harris and Members of the Planning Board:
Please find attached the Art Deco Society of Washington's written statement for the record for the Planning Board's hearing on Thursday regarding Item #10 involving the historic Tastee Diner. We appreciate your distributing it to the Board Members in advance of the hearing, and I look forward to testifying before you in person.

Best regards,
Deborah Chalfie, Preservation Chair
202-375-1856

From: [Deborah Chalfie](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: dchalfie@adsw.org
Subject: Re: Automatic reply: Written statement of Art Deco Society of Washington re: 8676 Georgia Ave. Sketch Plan and Preliminary Plan
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 1:46:02 PM

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

I filled out our mailing address on the sign-in form but neglected to include it in my written statement. It is:

P.O. Box 42722
Washington, DC. 20015

Thank you.

Typos and odd autospell words courtesy of my iPhone

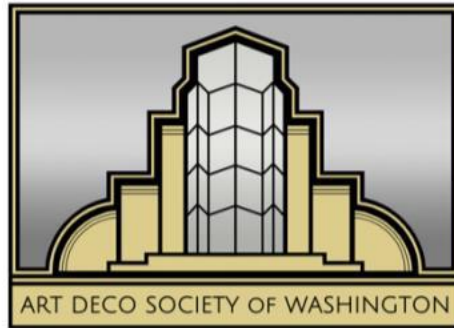
On Jul 16, 2024, at 11:45 AM, MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Thank you for contacting the Planning Board Chair's Office. This confirms receipt of your message for distribution to appropriate staff to review. If you have submitted an inquiry, we will respond in a timely manner. You may also leave a voice message at (301) 495-4605 and a staff member will return your call.

If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. If this was not already included, please reply to this email with that information. Written testimony submitted before the deadline of 12pm, two business days before the scheduled Planning Board meeting, will be distributed to the Board and staff and included in the public record. Written testimony received after the deadline will only be distributed to staff to review.

For more information about the Chair's Office, please visit:

<https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/>



Statement of Deborah Chalfie, Preservation Chair
Art Deco Society of Washington
Before the
Montgomery County Planning Board
July 18, 2024
Regarding
Tastee Diner, 8676 Georgia Ave. Project, Silver Spring, MD

Chairman Harris and Members of the Planning Board, the Art Deco Society of Washington appreciates the opportunity to testify in reference to preservation and restoration of the historic Tastee Diner as part of the 8676 Georgia Ave. Sketch Plan and Preliminary Plan¹ (the Proposal).

Founded in 1982, the Art Deco Society of Washington (ADSW) is a nonprofit membership organization covering the Washington DC region. Our mission is to foster awareness of, celebrate, and preserve the architectural, decorative, industrial, and cultural arts of the Art Deco era and adjacent modern movements of the 20th Century. ADSW has a solid record of leading or supporting historic preservation of significant architecture within Montgomery County, including deep involvement in the efforts that led to the designation of the Tastee Diner, Silver Theatre, and Silver Spring Shopping Center in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

The historic Silver Spring Tastee Diner originated with the 1946 delivery and on-site assembly of an Art Moderne building manufactured to look like a railroad dining car. The building's design and materials epitomized the Streamline Moderne, machine-age styling of the period between the two World Wars. Silver Spring's Tastee Diner features porcelain enamel panels, rounded corners, wrap-around ribbon windows and contrasting banding that culminates in chevrons, a stainless steel canopy, and ubiquitous stainless steel trim.² Originally sited on the northwest corner of Georgia Ave. and Wayne Ave., the diner was moved to its current location at 8601 Cameron in 2000. After 77 years in operation, the historic Silver Spring Tastee Diner closed last year.³

¹ 8676 Georgia Avenue Sketch Plan No. 320230060 & Preliminary Plan No. 120230150 (Montgomery Planning, July 8, 2024), available at <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/8676-Georgia-Ave-Sketch-Preliminary-SR-FINAL.pdf> [hereinafter *Proposal*].

² *Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form Re: Tastee Diner*, Inventory No. M: 36-13 (prep'd Aug. 31, 1994), available at https://mcatlas.org/hp2/hpdocs/M_%2036-13.pdf.

³ Sister Tastee Diners continue to operate in Bethesda and Laurel, MD.

The new owner, Roadside Development (aka Applicant), is proposing to build a 30-story, 300-foot high, residential/mixed-use high-rise on the combined parcel encompassing the former Capital One Bank on Georgia Ave. and the Tastee Diner on Cameron St. The applicant proposes to preserve the historically designated diner car portion of the Diner, to relocate it further down Cameron St. to the corner of Cameron St. and Ramsey Ave. to restore the diner's exterior, connect it to the new building at the back, and to adaptively reuse it, hopefully as another eating/drinking establishment.

ADSW appreciates that the applicant is proposing to preserve, restore, and reuse the structure. The Proposal before the Planning Board does not include details of the restoration. In their initial submission on and statement of support for the project to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC),⁴ however, Applicant committed to restoration of the building's enameled face panels on three sides, the continuous wraparound windows, and the stainless steel canopy and detailing on the façade. The Proposal will also extend the roof and reconstruct the Diner's west wall facing Ramsey Ave., so as to "recapture" the diner's original shape and give it a more independent profile from that direction. Placement of the diner car at grade will also enable the removal of the later-added steps, ramps, and railings that had cluttered the Diner's appearance in its current location.

In proposing the relocation and restoration of the Tastee Diner, Applicant stated:

Although the Historic Tastee Diner will be connected to the first floor of the Project it will read as an independent building and stand proud of the Project, with no new construction immediately above it. *The architecture of the Project will be specifically designed to not compete with the Historic Tastee Diner.*⁵

ADSW wholeheartedly supports this objective. Since their original proposal in July 2023, Applicant made several improvements last October to help ensure that the Tastee Diner building retains an independent profile from the high-rise looming over it. The Proposal situates the diner further out and away from the new building, bringing it out from underneath the overhanging parking garage, and angling the diner so as to be parallel to Cameron.⁶ We agree with all of these improvements.

However, the Proposal does not yet achieve the objective of designing the new building so as not to compete with the diner car. The height and massing of the new building necessarily "competes" with and dwarfs the tiny diner. Though we would have preferred a more prominent location on or near Georgia Ave., or relocation to an altogether separate but prominent site, the new and improved location at Cameron and Ramsey is satisfactory.

Nevertheless, the overhanging parking garage is still a substantial problem. The diner car may no longer technically⁷ be underneath that overhang, but it still certainly *appears* that way. The ground

⁴ Mont. County Historic Preservation Comm'n, Staff Report for Preliminary Consultation on Proposal for New Construction and Building Relocation at 8601 Cameron St. (Tastee Diner #36/13), for Meeting Date Aug. 16, 2023, at 19, 38-39, available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/II.A-8601-Cameron-Street-Silver-Spring.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.* at 36 (emphasis added).

⁶ See submission of Roadside, Bonstra Haresign Architects, 8676 Georgia Avenue, 8601 Cameron Street, Silver Spring: HPC Preliminary Consultation (Oct. 2, 2023), appended to Mont. County Historic Preservation Comm'n, Staff Report for Preliminary Consultation on Proposal for New Construction and Building Relocation at 8601 Cameron St. (Tastee Diner #36/13), for Meeting Date Oct. 25, 2023, at 11, 19, available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/II.A-8601-Cameron-Street-Silver-Spring.pdf>.

⁷ Fig. 9 of the Proposal makes it look like the new building still overhangs a portion of the Historic Tastee Diner's northeast corner. *Proposal, supra* n. 1, at 19.

level renderings of the Diner in Figures 10 and 11⁸ – and ground level is the location at which most pedestrians, drivers, and nearby residents will view the Diner – still show the Diner being overshadowed by the parking garage portion of the new building overhead. The design and protrusion of the parking garage magnifies the problem, making it look like the diner car is tucked into a recessed corner of the new tower.

This is not just ADSW’s view: it is the view of the HPC and the Silver Spring Design Advisory Panel (DAP) as well.

In their letter to the Planning Board, HPC Chair Sutton wrote that “HPC’s primary objective in the redevelopment of this site is to ensure the Tastee Diner retains as much of its independent appearance and streetscape presence as possible....” While HPC indicated that it supports the proposal, they also stated that “we feel the design for the new construction *requires further refinement to ensure the proposed tower does not appear to loom* over the small historic building....”⁹

In their last review of the project in October 2023, the DAP stated that it:

...is not satisfied with the existing partial elevation of the base as present behind the diner and asked the applicant team to think about the massing and design of the building more holistically. The latest proposed design for the parking podium base above the ground floor includes a horizontal lightweight metal screening that *slopes outward over the diner*.... The DAP would like to see a façade design that integrates with the overall design of the tower and yet *does not overpower the tiny diner* in front of the ground floor.¹⁰

The Proposal submitted to the Planning Board relays DAP’s “expectation that the overall architecture for the building will be further developed, with particular attention to the sculpting of a prominent tower top proximate to Georgia Avenue, *visual integration of parking levels into the overall façade design, and ensuring the design for the building is complimentary to the Historic Tastee Diner, and does not overpower it.*”¹¹

Yet, it has been almost a year since the DAP and HPC made it clear that changes were *still* needed to the garage overhang and base behind the diner. It is disappointing that this Proposal does not yet reflect any further fixes for a problem that everyone agrees needs to be addressed. ADSW understands that this parcel is narrow, that zoning allows (*but does not require*) a height of 300 feet, and that the Developer wishes to make the most of the space. Applicant has maintained that the Diner cannot be pulled out any further from the building. As a result, changes and redesign of the parking garage portion are the only option. For instance, the parking garage portion of the new building that

⁸ *Id.* at 20 and 21.

⁹ Letter from Robert K. Sutton, Chair, Mont. County Historic Preservation Comm’n, to Mont. County Planning Board (Jan. 24, 2024), Proposal Attachment D, at 12 (emphasis added). (Attachments to the Proposal available at <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Combined-Attachments-8676-Georgia-Avenue.pdf>).

¹⁰ Mont. Planning, Silver Spring Design Advisory Panel – October 18, 2023, Meeting Notes (Rev’d Oct. 24, 2023), Proposal Attachment E, at 6 (emphases added), available at <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Combined-Attachments-8676-Georgia-Avenue.pdf>.

¹¹ *Proposal*, *supra* n. 1, at 21. of proposal (July 8, 2024) (emphasis added), available at <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/8676-Georgia-Ave-Sketch-Preliminary-SR-FINAL.pdf>.

backs the historic Tastee Diner could be made smaller and set back further from the diner car, requiring a relocation or reduction of the number of parking spaces in the parking garage.

Zoning aside, the proposed building is much too big and tall for the site and what surrounds it. At *twice* the height of any adjacent buildings in the vicinity, a 30-story building would be the tallest building in Silver Spring. The Planning Board should take notice of the impact that the Proposal would have on other potential historic resources as well. The highrise will not only dwarf the Tastee Diner but will also tower over neighboring buildings such as the National Register-eligible Verizon building to its south, the mid-century Perpetual Building to its north, and the potentially National Register-eligible American National Bank Building across the street and Metropolitan Building one block up.¹²

If, however, the Planning Board is inclined to approve the Proposal, it should do so only under the required condition that the parking garage still looming over the historic Tastee Diner be further set back and redesigned in order to do what everyone agrees they want to do: to preserve, restore, and enhance the independent presentation of the historic Tastee Dinner to ensure it remains a county historic asset for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration of ADSW's views. If you have any questions, please contact me at dchalfie@adsw.org or Steve Knight, ADSW President, at sknight@adsw.org.

¹² These are buildings that the Historic Preservation Commission and its staff have, at various times, previously identified as preservation-worthy, though they don't yet have any protected status. *See e.g.*, Mont. Planning, *Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan*, at 187 (Approved and Adopted June 2022), available at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Silver-Spring-DAC-Approved-Adopted-web.pdf>; Potomac Hudson Engineering, *Historic Sites Survey Report: Silver Spring Central Business District* (Dec. 2002), available at http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2008/documents/20080612_resource-ss_cbd-survey1_print.pdf.

From: [Pat Kearney](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Cara Joson](#); [Scott Shoreman](#); [Thomas Rosenfield](#); [Lee Turcotte](#); [Bossi, Adam](#)
Subject: Written Testimony for Item 10 on the July 18, 2024 Agenda, 8676-Georgia-Ave-Sketch 3200230060-Preliminary Plan 120230150-
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 11:46:52 AM
Attachments: [2024.06.30 Google Maps Photos of City Market DC and Cameron and Ramsey.pdf](#)
[2024.07.18 testimony of PJK for Planning Board.docx](#)

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

To the Chair of the Planning Board,

I plan to attend the July 18, 2024 hearing, virtually, to testify, but in case of technical difficulties I have attached a Word version of my expected testimony and PDF photos which are referenced therein. Thank you for considering my testimony. I look forward to the hearing this Thursday.

Respectfully,

Patrick J. Kearney
8716 Ramsey Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-452-5317
unclejalmar@yahoo.com

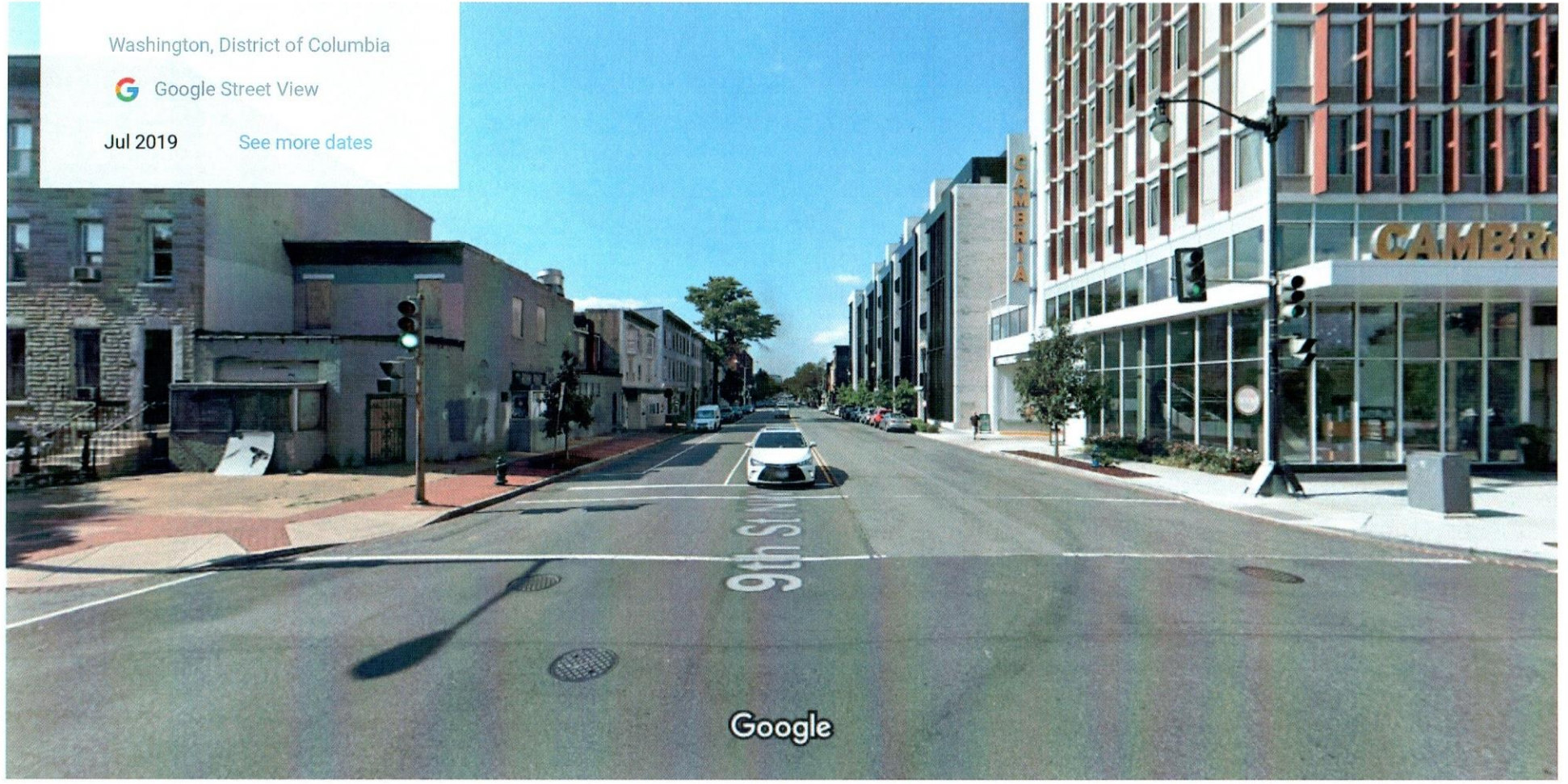
Google Maps 1398 9th St NW

Washington, District of Columbia

Google Street View

Jul 2019

See more dates



Google

Image capture: Jul 2019 © 2024 Google



Google Maps 770 P St NW

Washington, District of Columbia

Google Street View

Aug 2022 See more dates




Image capture: Aug 2022 © 2024 Google



Google Maps 8531 Cameron St



Silver Spring, Maryland

 Google Street View

Nov 2016 [See more dates](#)

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TESTIMONY OF PATRICK J. KEARNEY FOR JULY 18, 2024 HEARING

My Name is Patrick Kearney. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I live at 8716 Ramsey Ave, directly opposite what is now the Tastee Diner.

Roadside Development plans to put a 30 story building with enough retail space to satisfy a retailer like Trader Joes, 525 residential apartments and parking for more than 300 cars for residential and retail along with 3 truck bays, including a bay for a full size tractor trailer all on Ramsey Avenue directly across the street from our townhomes.

The Developer's argument for doing so is that they can check all the boxes on the 2023 Design Guidelines for maximum density. They say that they cannot put truck and vehicle entrances anywhere other than across the street from the front doors of my house and my 5 neighbors – the only residential residences that the new building will face, because it doesn't fit the plan and the turning radius on Georgia is inadequate under their current design.

The argument is inhuman bureaucratic double talk designed to maximize space on a narrow property not fit for the size of the proposed development. No traffic study has been done on the impact to Ramsey Avenue because it is not required in a "Red Zone" urban area. But our little Red Zone is unlike any other in the area in the Central Business District because no other townhomes are forced to face a 30 story building. Townhomes are going to face a loading dock where trucks cannot pull in without traveling into Cameron Street and have to back down the wrong side of the street in order to navigate a turn – a turn that will likely end up with trucks jumping the curb in front of the Ramsey Townhomes. These trucks will be competing for the road with the cars from the 57 townhomes of my community

that can only access our garages from Ramsey Ave. and, if the developer gets its way, will also compete with over 300 cars that will enter and leave the development on Ramsey. We have never had traffic and traffic noise like this on Ramsey and no other residential area would tolerate such noise and traffic.

More to the point, at 54 feet, Ramsey Avenue is the single narrowest street referenced as a Type B street at pages 14 and 15 of the 2023 Design Guidelines -- it's not tied for narrowest, it is the narrowest. Ramsey was not built for that kind of traffic of traffic proposed – yet no study will be done as to the effect on our community.

No other townhouse community or residential neighborhood has a loading dock and/or a garage with the proposed capacity in the proximity to a front door and living room window proposed by the developer

The Board should consider the guidelines for the Development of a 1st Street Extension at Cameron at section 3.5.1 which says “The design of the Bases of both buildings should relate to the scale of the townhomes and low-rise development on the south side of Cameron Street.” Not surprisingly, Cameron is 74 feet wide – a full 20 feet wider, not counting sidewalks and buffers – yet the Development guidelines limit height. Ramsey at 54 feet and with fewer buffers means that a 70 foot face will tower over our properties and make Ramsey a Canyon with trucks and cars – a service alley.

The developer may take solace that the townhomes on Ramsey are not mentioned in the 1st St. Extension – but the residences of Ramsey Avenue are entitled to the same protection of scale and set back as our neighbors on Cameron, otherwise the guidelines are arbitrary and capricious and would be found by a court to be violative of the rights of the residents of Ramsey Avenue.

This Board should also considered analogous restrictions along Eastern Avenue at section 3.4.3 of the 2023 Design Guidelines for Heights along Eastern Avenue which will not allow a building to exceed 70 feet in height within 20 feet from the Eastern Avenue and step-backs and/or design upper portions of buildings so that no building portion exceeds 120 feet in height within 40 feet from the Eastern Avenue. Eastern Ave. is 2 lanes with parking on both sides, easily twice as wide of a set back as on Ramsey– so the set back from single family homes to 70 feet is greater than for those of us on Ramsey Avenue. Those homes are in DC. Residents along Ramsey Avenue should be given the same protection as nonresidents of the county. It would be arbitrary and capricious to allow heights greater than those allowed on Eastern Avenue in proximity to our townhomes.

Over 25 years ago, this Planning Board in its earlier iteration, gave EYA approval to build the Cameron Hill Townhomes despite the fact that the property was zoned for denser development. This was done at a time when the CBD was floundering and Montgomery County was doing all it could to spark an economic and cultural revival of a moribund downtown Silver Spring. Implicit in the grant of the townhome community is the covenant that the County is not going to allow a developer to ruin the experience promised by urban townhomes. Allowing the current sketch plan to go forward would breach that implicit covenant.

It is fine to develop around us, but do not lay the entire burden of the dense population on a half block of residences on Ramsey Avenue. Please do not make us suffer from truck traffic untold number of vehicles coming and going for residences and grocery shopping like you see at the Wayne Avenue Whole Foods or at the White Oak Trader Joes

When I asked the developer’s representative if they built in proximity to townhomes – they pointed me to City Market at 9th and O, NW in DC. My written

testimony attaches photos of that area and my block on Ramsey Avenue. I invite you to inspect the property. The City Market buildings are more akin to the buildings now being developed at Georgia Ave and Spring Street. 9th Street is much wider than Ramsey and there are no tractor trailer pull in loading docks on them – O Street is marginally wider than Ramsey, but there are no loading docks and the height of the building is not 30 stories so the mass does not overwhelm the smaller buildings. In short, Roadside has never put up a building similar to the proposed development across a narrow street with pre-existing townhomes and no one can point to a townhome community anywhere in Silver Spring that will be burdened in the fashion that Ramsey Avenue will be burdened by the current sketch plan.

As a homeowner on Ramsey Avenue who has over 40 years experience in real estate litigation and valuation of properties, it is my opinion that placing my property adjacent to a loading dock for large trucks and the entrance to parking lot that will add hundreds of novel cars to Ramsey Avenue a day, the quality of life for me and my family will seriously degrade and, because there are no comparable properties like my townhome in close proximity to a loading dock that can handle tractor trailers and an addition of hundreds of cars a day to our short block that the value of my townhome will precipitously decline because it will no longer be a desirable residential property. It is inconceivable that Roadside should try to maximize its profits at the expense of my own pre-existing home.

- This planning board should deny the sketch plan because it violates Rule 1.3 of the 2023 Design Guidelines because it is not compatible with the “scale of the immediate surrounding neighborhood context.” Rather, the heights overwhelm our small townhomes, the traffic overwhelms the block, and the

noise of truck traffic degrades where we live and will significantly adversely affect the value of our homes.

- Thank you.

Kathleen L. Lanigan
8714 Ramsey Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (Owner)
Mailing Address: 4 East Indian Spring Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20901
Cell/Text: 301-830-3298; Email: katelanigan@verizon.net

May 13, 2024

Adam Bossi (Via email: Adam.Bossi@montgomeryplanning.org)
Intake and Regulatory Coordination Division
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Plan Nos. 320230060 and 120230150
Plan Name: 8676 Georgia Avenue

Dear Mr. Bossi:

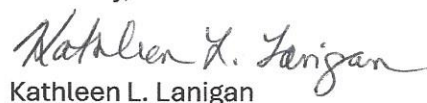
I am the original and current owner of the townhouse located at 8714 Ramsey Avenue, in the Cameron Hill community in downtown Silver Spring, MD. My townhouse is located directly across Ramsey Avenue from the referenced planned new development.

I am writing to register my objections to the plan as follows:

- 1) The size and scope of the development is immense and will dwarf the surrounding developments. I fully understand the planning goal for high-density development in the emerging "urban" center of downtown Silver Spring, but a 30-story building is taller than any existing building in the vicinity and will be a monstrosity.
- 2) If I understand the plans correctly, the part of the planned development which will face Ramsey Avenue will be 10 stories tall and will house the garage for the building. This will dwarf the 3-story townhouses on Ramsey Avenue.
- 3) The sole access to the garage and loading docs is currently planned for Ramsey Avenue, directly across from the Cameron Hill Townhouses. Why is all the car and truck traffic being funneled onto the smallest of the three streets bordering the planned development? This traffic should access the building from Cameron Street, which is better designed to handle larger traffic volumes, while keeping the primary access off Georgia Avenue. Your traffic study is flawed and overestimates the prior traffic counts from the long-shuttered Capital One Bank and the Tastee Diner. The proposed development will SIGNIFICANTLY increase the traffic on Ramsey Avenue.

The impact of the car and delivery truck traffic on Ramsey Avenue will be horrendous in terms of volume, noise, and disruption to Cameron Hill, resulting in a negative effect on the quality of life and investment value of the existing townhouses.

Sincerely,


Kathleen L. Lanigan

From: [Carrie Kisicki](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: CSG Testimony on Item 10 - 8676 Georgia Avenue, Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plan
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 12:05:20 PM
Attachments: [07_18 Planning Board Testimony .pdf](#)

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

Good afternoon,

Please accept the attached testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth for Item 10 - 8676 Georgia Avenue, Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plan.

Sincerely,
Carrie Kisicki

--

Carrie Kisicki | Montgomery Advocacy Manager

Coalition for Smarter Growth

Coordinator for Montgomery for All

carrie@smartergrowth.net | calendly.com/carrie-csg

www.smartergrowth.net | [@betterDCregion](#)

Your gift helps keep CSG's advocacy going! [Donate today!](#)

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From: [Carrie Kisicki](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: CSG Testimony on Item 10 - 8676 Georgia Avenue, Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plan
Date: Tuesday, July 16, 2024 12:07:34 PM

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

Here is the mailing address for CSG:
PO Box 73282
Washington, DC 20056

On Tue, Jul 16, 2024 at 11:59 AM Carrie Kisicki <carrie@smartergrowth.net> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Please accept the attached testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth for Item 10 - 8676 Georgia Avenue, Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plan.

Sincerely,
Carrie Kisicki

--

Carrie Kisicki | Montgomery Advocacy Manager
Coalition for Smarter Growth
Coordinator for Montgomery for All
carrie@smartergrowth.net | calendly.com/carrie-csg
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July 18, 2024

Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Dr, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Item 10 - 8676 Georgia Avenue, Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plan

Dear Chair Harris and Planning Commissioners:

Please accept the following testimony on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization advocating for walkable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the D.C. region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We wish to express our support for the proposed mixed-use development at 8676 Georgia Avenue and 8601 Cameron Street. This development will provide up to 525 additional transit-accessible homes in downtown Silver Spring; improve pedestrian and bike infrastructure in the surrounding area; and offer additional retail and commercial space to serve this neighborhood and its many residents and visitors just blocks from the Silver Spring Metro.

With the county projected to grow by over 60,000 households by 2040—over half of which are projected to be renter households in multi-family buildings¹—providing more housing and amenities close to high-frequency transit is essential for our county to thrive as a sustainable, equitable, and economically-competitive community, accommodating expected growth while minimizing costly and environmentally harmful sprawl and car dependence.

We wish to note a number of specific reasons why we support this application:

- The development will provide new housing and employment opportunities, with up to 25,000 square feet of new commercial space and up to 525 new multifamily housing units (including up to 79 MPDUs).
- This site is ideally located to provide access not only to the many amenities on offer in downtown Silver Spring, but also convenient access to opportunities throughout the region due to its close proximity to high-frequency bus routes, the Silver Spring Metro and Paul S. Sarbanes Transit Center, and future Purple Line stations. These opportunities will be accessible even to those households who for reasons of income, ability, or personal preference do not own a car.
- One-way, separated bicycle lanes on both sides of Cameron Street contribute to the Central Green Loop through downtown Silver Spring (see packet p. 43). Safe and

¹ [Thrive 2050](#), Housing for All, p. 130.

protected bike lanes ensure the safety of bikers and promote more micro-mobility and less auto transit, thus helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- The development will also improve sidewalks on the property frontage, improving pedestrian safety and navigability through this area.
- The development updates the uses on this site to better match the needs of today's downtown Silver Spring community, and to better align land use choices on strategic sites near transit with the county's sustainability and housing equity goals. It will preserve the historic Tastee Diner while also adding well-located housing and retail opportunities on this site, as well as the adjacent and clearly underutilized site that is currently occupied by a vacant bank and surface parking lot.

For the reasons listed above, the Coalition for Smarter Growth respectfully encourages the Planning Commission to approve Sketch Plan No. 320230060 and Preliminary Plan No. 120230150 on 8676 Georgia Avenue.

We are grateful for the time and effort of the Planning Board and Planning staff on this matter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Kisicki".

Carrie Kisicki
Montgomery County Advocacy Manager

July 18, 2024

MCPB Agenda Item #10: 8676 Georgia Avenue, Sketch Plan 320230060, Preliminary Plan No. 120230150

Hello everyone, my name is Ben Miller. I work in housing policy and live on Fenwick Lane, across the Cameron Ave garage from the proposed development. I am here to offer unabashed support for this project. It embodies the sort of smart, inclusive growth we need to keep our community thriving.

I grew up in Silver Spring, and I chose to return after graduate school because this city offers energy and amenities that nowhere else in the D.C. area can match. I love our restaurants, bars, and culture, which I can enjoy without needing to own a car or struggling with high rent. My only complaint is that my part of town, the Downtown North area, doesn't feel so lively. It lacks the commerce and above all the people that make areas like Ellsworth and Fenton exciting. After 5pm, there's hardly anything open or anyone on the streets. I love where I live, but it's dull.

The 8676 Georgia Ave redevelopment offers as close to a panacea for fixing that as I could imagine. It promises to take one of the choicest blocks in Silver Spring, currently a deserted strip, and unleash its potential as a hub of people and activity. We need more people living in Downtown North, and this project will bring them in. We need more commercial space, and this project will create it. We need to make the most of our new Silver Spring Rec Center, and this project will fill it up. We need to keep our city affordable, and this project will help to achieve that, both through its MPDUs and its effect on citywide housing supply.

And we already have the infrastructure in place. 8676 Georgia Ave is nestled between a major traffic corridor on one side and Metro on the other. There isn't a more transportation friendly lot in the city. The intersection at Cameron and Second, for instance, is designed to accommodate far more cars than it currently does. Let's put its capacity to good use.

I am so glad that Silver Spring continues to attract investment and development, which for 25 years have turned it into one of the nation's most livable communities. I encourage the planning board to give its full support to this project.

Thank you.

Ben Miller
1320 Fenwick Ln #700
Silver Spring, MD 20910