

SONINA PROPERTIES APARTMENTS

SKETCH PLAN NO. 320250010



Redevelopment of an commercial office building site to allow for a new multifamily residential building with up to 130,840 square feet of residential uses on 2.72 acres with a minimum 12.5% MPDUs, within walking distance of two future Purple Line stations.

COMPLETED: 5/5/2025

PLANNING BOARD HEARING DATE: 5/15/2025

MCPB ITEM NO. 7

Planning Staff

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LOCATION/ADDRESS

831 University Blvd E; at the southwest quadrant of the intersection of University Blvd and Forston St

MASTER PLAN

2013 Long Branch Sector Plan

ZONE

CRT-1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-60

PROPERTY SIZE

2.72 acres

APPLICANT

VICSN 1 LLC

ACCEPTANCE DATE

February 19, 2025

REVIEW BASIS

Chapter 59

Summary:

- Planning Staff recommends approval of the Sketch Plan with conditions. The Project will require subsequent Preliminary Plan, Site Plan, and Forest Conservation Plan review.
- The development concept consists of replacing an aging commercial medical-office building and surface parking with a new multifamily residential building for up to 148 units, including a minimum of 12.5% MPDUs, and associated amenities. The maximum number of dwelling units will be determined at Preliminary Plan.
- The Subject Property is within approximately 1/3 mile (~10-minute walk) of two future Purple Line stations.
- MTA Purple Line construction is active along the Property's frontages. MCDOT bicycle lane construction is planned on the Property's Carroll Avenue frontage.
- Since the Site is in the CRT zone, purchase of Building Lot Terminations (BLTs) is optional and not included in the public benefit categories proposed in this application.
- As of the date of this Staff Report, no community correspondence has been received regarding the Application.

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SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS

SKETCH PLAN 320250010

Staff recommends approval of Sonina Properties Apartments Sketch Plan No. 320250010, for up to 130,840 square feet of density on 2.72 acres, zoned CRT-1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-60, in the 2013 *Long Branch Sector Plan* area. The following site development elements are binding under Section 59.7.3.3.F:

1. Maximum density and height;
2. Approximate location of lots and public dedications;
3. General location and extent of public open space;
4. General location of vehicular access points;
5. Public benefit schedule; and
6. Architectural elevations for minimum percentage of transparency on the ground floor, maximum separation between operable doors and incorporation of design priorities of the Sector Plan.

All other elements of the Sketch Plan are illustrative and subject to refinement at the time of Site Plan.

This approval is subject to the following conditions¹:

1. **Density**
The Sketch Plan is limited to a maximum of 130,840 square feet of total residential development.
2. **Height**
The development is limited to a maximum building height of forty-five feet (45 ft) proximate to existing single-family dwellings on Forston Street and a maximum building height of sixty feet (60 ft) for the remainder of the building, as measured from the building height measuring point to be illustrated on the Certified Site Plan.
3. **Incentive Density**
The development must be constructed with the public benefits listed below unless modifications are made under Section 59-7.3.3.I. Total points must equal at least fifty (50) and be chosen from at least three (3) categories as required by Section 59-4.5.4.A.2. The requirements of Division 59-4.7 and the *CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines* must be fulfilled for each public benefit. Final points will be established at Site Plan approval.
 - a) Transit Proximity, achieved through Level 2 transit proximity;

¹ For the purposes of these conditions, the term “Applicant” shall also mean the developer, the owner or any successor (s) in interest to the terms of this approval.

- b) Connectivity and Mobility, achieved by providing fewer than the maximum parking spaces under the Zoning Ordinance;
- c) Quality of Building and Site Design, achieved through architectural elevations, exceptional design, public open space, and structured parking; and
- d) Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment achieved through cool roof, energy conservation, and vegetated roof.

4. **Public Open Space**

The Applicant must provide a minimum of ten percent (10%) of the Site Area as Public Open Space, totaling 8,215 square feet.

Outside Agencies

- 5. The Planning Board has reviewed and accepts the recommendations of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (“MCDOT”) in its letter dated April 25, 2025, and incorporates them as conditions of the Sketch Plan approval. The Applicant must comply with each of the recommendations in the letter, which may be amended by MCDOT if the amendment does not conflict with any other conditions of the Sketch Plan approval.
- 6. The Planning Board has reviewed and accepts the recommendations of the Maryland State Highway Administration (“MDOT SHA”) in its letter dated April 3, 2025. The Applicant must address MDOT SHA review comments as part of a preliminary plan application.
- 7. The Planning Board has reviewed and accepts the recommendations of the MCDPS Fire Department Access and Water Supply Section in its letter April 10, 2025, and hereby incorporates them as conditions of approval. The Applicant must comply with each of the recommendations in the letter, which MCDPS may amend if the amendments do not conflict with other conditions of Sketch Plan approval.

8. **Future Coordination for the Preliminary Plan and Site Plan**

In addition to any other requirements for Preliminary Plans under Chapter 50 and Site Plans under Chapter 59, the following must be addressed in the Preliminary Plan and Site Plan applications as applicable:

- a) The Applicant must submit and receive approval of a Preliminary/Final Forest Conservation Plan.
- b) The Applicant must obtain Stormwater Management concept approval consistent with Chapter 19 of the Montgomery County Code.
- c) The Applicant must provide a noise analysis at the time of Preliminary Plan. Coordinate with Environmental Planning staff regarding noise analysis parameters prior to the submission.
- d) The Applicant must address the environmental recommendations of the Sector Plan.
- e) Green roof areas should be built in place and avoid the use of tray systems.

- f) Planting techniques such as interconnected tree panels and tree pits that maximize soil volume for each tree and enhance tree survivability near streets should be incorporated into the design, with associated design details provided.
- g) The Applicant must incorporate a vegetated (screening) buffer between the proposed mixed-use development and existing residential developments.
- h) The Applicant must shift the proposed loading space location further to the south along the building's western façade.
- i) The Applicant must provide drawings showing conformance with Residential Compatibility standards for Forston Street.
- j) The Applicant must provide final design of public open space meeting the criteria of Section 59.6.3.6.
- k) The Applicant must address building design comments relevant to the integration of Wing A and Wing B proximate to the lobby space at the northeast corner of the building.
- l) The Applicant must address building design comments to create a visual relationship between the eastern façade of the building and intersection of Carroll Avenue and University Boulevard.
- m) The Applicant must address MDOT SHA comments dated April 3, 2025.

9. Validity

A site plan must be submitted within 36 months after the date the resolution is sent per Section 59-7.3.3.G.

SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

VICINITY

The Subject Property is located at 831 University Boulevard East, at the southwest quadrant of the intersection of University Boulevard and Forston Street. This location is just outside of the city limits of Takoma Park and approximately one-tenth of a mile west of the Montgomery/ Prince George's County border. It is along the Purple Line light rail corridor and situated equidistant from the future Piney Branch Station (approximately one-third of a mile to the north) and from the future Takoma Langley Station (approximately one-third of a mile to the south) as illustrated in Figure 1. At the time of writing of this Staff Report, construction of the Purple Line is underway proximate to the Property.



Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

As shown in Figure 2, an established neighborhood of single-family dwellings in the R-60 zone confronts the northern portion of the Property. An expansive paved area associated with the Takoma Academy Preparatory School/Sligo Adventist Elementary School (R-60 zone) abuts the west side of the Property. The east side of the Property fronts University Boulevard with low-rise, multifamily buildings in the R-10 Zone and residential duplexes in the R-40 beyond. The southeast portion of the Site abuts Carroll Avenue, with a gas and service station in the CRT-1.5, C-1.0, R-0.5, H-60 zone beyond. Abutting the Property's southern boundary is the Takoma Park Spanish SDA Church in the R-60 Zone.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Property is comprised of Lots 1, 2, and 3, Block L, Rolling Terrace, on Plat No. 1728, and an unplatted parcel described as "Parcel 500 Part of Beals Contest" as recorded by deed in Book 18598, Page 47 in the Montgomery County Land Records. It has a total gross tract area of 2.72 acres (118,318 square feet), which is reduced to 1.89 acres (82,151 square feet) after prior and required dedication of land area for public rights-of-way are deducted. The Property is pentagonal-shaped and bound on four sides by roadways, Glenville Road, Forston Street, University Boulevard and Carroll Avenue. It is developed with an approximately 31,000 square-foot brutalist-style commercial, medical office building surrounded by surface parking that was originally constructed in the 1960s. The 2013 *Long Branch Sector Plan* identifies this Property as being covered with 94 % impervious surfaces and there are no existing stormwater facilities on-site. The grade of the Property generally slopes downhill from north to south. There are few existing trees and limited landscaping on the Property.



Figure 2 – Subject Property

A stub of Glenville Road abuts the northwestern portion of the Property and Forston Street parallels the northern lot line. Glenville Road and Forston Street are County-operated streets. University Boulevard, abutting the east side of the Property, is a major regional thoroughfare. It intersects with Carroll Avenue at the southeast corner of the Property. University Boulevard and the portion of Carroll Avenue abutting the Property are state roadways operated by the State Highway Administration. Existing vehicular access to the Property is from a single curb cut to University Boulevard and from two inter-property driveway connections shared with the Takoma Park Spanish SDA Church property to the south.



Figure 3 – Existing Conditions Photo looking northwest from University Boulevard

Purple Line construction is ongoing adjacent to the Property. Temporary construction easements are in place in the Property's frontages along Forston Street, University Boulevard, and Carroll Avenue to support Purple Line construction. The Purple Line project involves installing various utilities in the right-of-way of University Boulevard directly adjacent to the Property. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is in the design process for a new bicycle lane capital project (MCDOT CIP No.502004) along Carroll Avenue, including adjacent to the Property. At the time of publication of this Report, the CIP was approximately 70% designed.

The Property is located within the Northwest Branch watershed, which is a Use IV² watershed. The Site is currently developed and not associated with any areas of forest, 100-year floodplains, streams, or stream buffers. Soils associated with the Property are classified generally as silt loam and are not

² Use IV: RECREATIONAL TROUT WATERS. Waters that are suitable for: water contact sports: play and leisure time activities where the human body may come in direct contact with the surface water; fishing; the growth and propagation of fish (other than trout); other aquatic life, and wildlife; agricultural water supply and industrial water supply, capable of holding or supporting adult trout for put-and-take fishing; and managed as a special fishery by periodic stocking and seasonal catching.

considered highly erodible or otherwise sensitive; additionally, there are no areas of steep slopes within the project area.

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PREVIOUS APPROVALS

There are no previous zoning or subdivision approvals associated with the Property. Existing development on the Property dates to the mid-1960s.

PROPOSAL

This Sketch Plan proposes the full redevelopment of the Property, generally consisting of removal of existing site features and construction of a multifamily residential building, with a combination of structured and surface parking, and associated amenities. A maximum development density of 130,840 square feet is proposed for up to 148 multifamily residential units, with a minimum of 12.5 % MPDUs. Structured parking is provided at grade in the northern portion of the building and subsurface parking is provided below the remainder of the building.

The proposed U-shaped building will front on University Boulevard with its main lobby located proximate to the intersection of University Boulevard and Forston Street. The length of the building will span north to south. The western half of the Property is designed to accommodate vehicular and loading access, circulation, and parking, as well as for open space and recreational amenities, and stormwater management. A single vehicular access point is created from Glenville Road. The existing curb cut to University Boulevard and two inter-property driveway connections with the Takoma Park Spanish SDA Church to the south will be eliminated.



Figure 4 – Sketch Plan

Frontage improvements generally include new sidewalks, and street trees. Adequate space is provided between the building and Forston Street to allow for additional landscape screening proximate to the neighboring single-family homes as recommended by the Sector Plan. In addition to sidewalk and street tree improvements, the University Boulevard frontage will include a protected bicycle lane and Carroll Avenue frontage will allow for MCDOT's bicycle lane construction.

BUILDING/ARCHITECTURE

The proposed building is designed with two main intersecting masses referred to as Wing A and Wing B in the Applicant's Statement of Justification. Wing A is the main building mass and is shaped like a broad arc that follows the Property's north to south length. Wing B is the smaller, northern building mass that is set parallel to the Property's northern boundary with Forston Street. These two distinct masses integrate at the Property's northeast corner, adjacent to the intersection of Forston Street and University Boulevard. The main lobby of the building will be located at this corner, with entrances to both University Boulevard and Forston Street. The lobby design includes a high degree of transparency to allow for views in and out of the space.



Figure 5 – Illustrative Building Design looking west from University Boulevard

Wing A is to be comprised of five levels of residential units atop of a one-level parking garage. Following the general sloping nature of the Property, the parking garage will be subsurface at the northern end of Wing A and at grade on its southern portion. As shown in the massing diagrams below, the arc shape of Wing A follows the general shape of the Property. The length and mass of Wing A is visually broken down by defining multiple bays, inclusion of vertical balcony stacks and offset window patterns. Wing A is envisioned to be clad with architectural paneling complimentary of the materiality of neighboring religious and educational buildings, with materials to be finalized at Site Plan. Wing A will be the tallest portion of the building, with a maximum height of no more than 60 feet.

Wing B is the smaller of the two building masses. It is rectangular in shape and will have a maximum height of no more than 45 feet. It consists of a single level of at-grade structured parking, with three levels of residential units above. The general shape, scale and use of red brick in the composition of Wing B make it relatable to the adjacent residential development.



AERIAL - MASSING IN CONTEXT - FROM SE



AERIAL - MASSING IN CONTEXT - FROM NE



AERIAL - MASSING IN CONTEXT - FROM N



AERIAL - MASSING IN CONTEXT - FROM W

Figure 6 – Massing Diagrams

OPEN SPACE

With four roadway frontages and 2.72 acres tract area, the Sketch Plan is required to provide a minimum of 10 % of the Site Area, which equals 8, 215 square feet, as public open space in accordance with Section 59-4.5.4.B. The Application proposes 12,501 square feet of public open space area, or approximately 15.2 % of the site area, which will be reviewed further at Site Plan to ensure it conforms to the requirements of Section 59.6.3.6.

TRANSPORTATION

Existing site access and circulation access for all modes of transportation is currently centralized via a single curb cut to University Boulevard (MD-193). Secondary vehicular access points are provided by two private driveway connections with the church property to the south. The Project proposes closing the University Boulevard access and two driveway connections and consolidates all vehicular and loading access to Glenville Road (Figure 6).

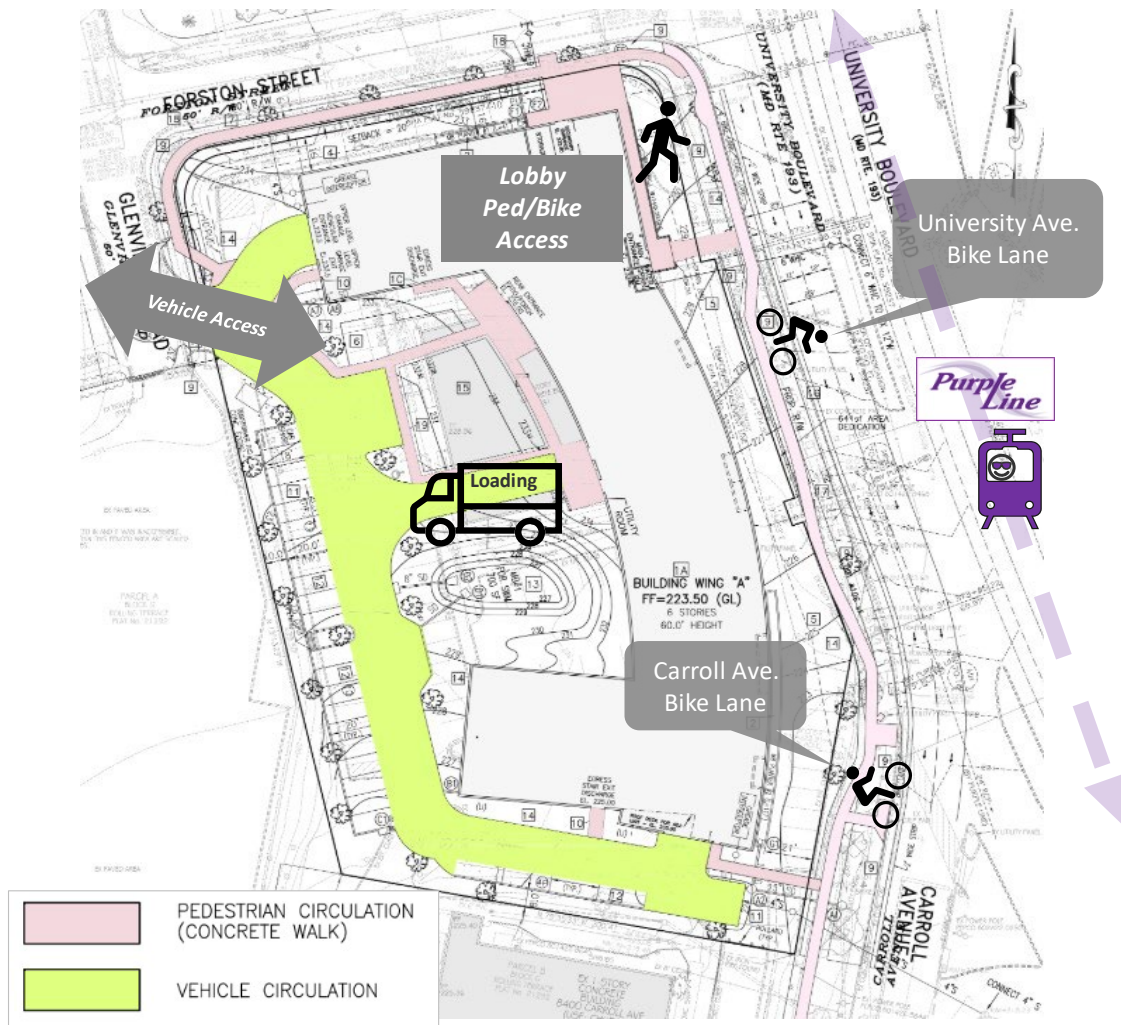


Figure 6 – Site Access and Circulation

Vehicular parking is provided on site in a surface parking lot and in two separate structured parking facilities within the proposed building. Most of the proposed vehicular parking will be in the two parking structures. The northern building wing (Wing B) includes at grade parking within the structure. Wing A includes subsurface parking under the bulk of the building. The quantity of vehicular parking spaces (115 spaces) is proposed to be below the maximum number of spaces permitted (183 spaces). Given the Property's proximity of less than one-half mile from Purple Line stations, and residential use of the proposal, the development qualifies to provide as few as zero parking spaces onsite³. Providing a minimum quantity of parking spaces is encouraged, with the final number of spaces to be determined at site plan review. One loading space is provided on the west side of the

³ Note that at least one ADA parking spaces will be required.

building, with the final location to be determined at site plan review. Proposed loading will be accessible to residents for moving in and out and for building service access. Long-term bicycle parking accommodations are provided in a secure bicycle room in the structured parking garage under the building's lobby. The final number, layout and design of short- and long-term bicycle parking will be reviewed with a site plan application.

As previously noted, and shown in Figure 1, the Property is located within one-third of a mile of the Piney Branch Road and Takoma-Langley Purple Line stations. The Site is also serviced by Metro-Bus lines C2 and C4, and Ride-On bus lines 17, 18, and 25.

Frontage improvements will be required on all Property frontages. New sidewalks and street trees will be provided along the Site's Forston Street and Glenville Road frontages. Along University Boulevard, the Sketch Plan accommodates an eight-foot-wide sidewalk, an expanded pedestrian/bicycle buffer, and a new buffered bicycle lane as envisioned by the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*, the 2024 *Complete Streets Design Guide*, and the *Purple Line Functional Plan*. The Sketch Plan is also designed to accommodate MCDOT's design for Capital Improvement Project No.502004 for new protected bicycle lanes on Carroll Avenue in the Property's frontage.

The Applicant has coordinated with MCDOT, MDOTSHA, and Planning Staff regarding planning, design and spatial needs for frontage improvements proposed along Site frontages, with a focus on University Boulevard and Carroll Avenue. Continued coordination by all parties through the preliminary plan and site plan review process will be necessary to ensure frontage improvements are designed appropriately and can be implemented.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The *Long Branch Sector Plan* identifies the Property as having at least 94% impervious cover. There are few environmental features associated with the Property. It is dominated by surface parking and the single existing commercial office building. The periphery of the Property is lawn area, with a few trees dotting the Property line. The existing parking areas do not include stormwater management features.

A Natural Resources Inventory/ Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) #420242790 was approved for the Property on September 3, 2024. There are no streams, wetlands, 100-year flood plains, or their associated buffers located on site. There is a significant tree near the Property boundary in the southeast section. The soils associated with the Property are classified as silt loam, which are not highly erodible nor otherwise sensitive. There are no known rare, threatened, or endangered species on the Property. There are no known historic properties on or near the Site.

A Forest Conservation Plan must be submitted with the Preliminary Plan/Site Plan. A noise analysis is required with the Preliminary Plan, due to the proximity to University Blvd and Carroll Ave.

SECTION 4: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Applicant has complied with all submittal and noticing requirements, and a pre-submittal public meeting was held on December 18, 2024. Community members in attendance asked general questions about the proposed development that the Applicant's team addressed. Notes from the pre-submittal community meeting are included herein as Attachment C.

As of the date of this Staff Report, no correspondence has been received.

SECTION 5: SKETCH PLAN 320250010 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of a Sketch Plan is to identify general land uses, development intensity, and public benefits for the optional method of development in the CR, CRT, EOF or LSC zones. The Sketch Plan is intended to be conceptual in nature with an emphasis on building densities, massing, heights and anticipated uses, the locations of open and public use spaces, the general circulation patterns for all modes of transportation, an estimated range of peak hour trips and relationships between existing or proposed adjacent buildings and rights-of-way. Details of the proposed development are determined during Preliminary and Site Plan review. Section 59.7.3.3.E of the Zoning Ordinance states: "To approve a Sketch Plan the Planning Board must find that the following elements are appropriate in concept and appropriate for further detailed review at Site Plan. The Sketch Plan must:

1. Meet the objectives, general requirements, and standards of this Chapter;

Table 1: Sonina Property Apartments Sketch Plan Data Table for CRT-1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-60 Zone, Optional Method, Section 59.4.5.4

Development Standard	Permitted/ Required	Proposed
Tract Area	n/a	118,318 sf (2.72 acres) ⁴
Tract Area - Prior Dedication	n/a	34,289 sf (0.79 acres)
Tract Area - Proposed Dedication	n/a	1,878 sf (0.04 acres)
Site Area⁵ (tract area minus dedications)	n/a	82,151 sf (1.89 acres)
Mapped Density CRT-1.5, C-0.5, R-1.5, H-60		
Residential (GFA/ FAR)	177,477 sf (1.5 FAR)	130,840 sf (1.10 FAR)

⁴ Tract area does not include 2,970 square feet of University Boulevard frontage land conveyed to the State of Maryland in fee simple for the Purple Line light rail project.

⁵ Site area is determined by tract area minus any previous and proposed dedications.

Commercial (GFA/FAR)	59,159 sf (0.5 FAR)	0 sf (0 FAR)
Total Mapped Density (GFA/FAR)	177,477 sf (1.5 FAR)	130,840 sf (1.10 FAR)
MPDU requirement	12.5%	12.5% min. ⁶
MPDU Bonus Density (GFA/FAR)	N/a	0 sf / 0 FAR
Total GFA/FAR	177,477 sf (1.5 FAR)	130,840 sf (1.10 FAR)
Building Height, max average⁷	45 ft / 60 ft	45 ft / 60 ft
Public Open Space (min sf)	10 % (8,215 sf)	15.2% (12,501 sf)
Vehicle Parking (min./max.)	0 /183	115
Loading Spaces	1	1

Section 59.4.1.8.B.2.b – Height Compatibility

When the subject property confronts a property in an Agricultural, Rural Residential, Residential Detached, or Residential Townhouse zone that is vacant or improved with an agricultural or residential use, any structure may not protrude beyond a 45 degree angular plane projecting over the subject property, measured from a height equal to the height allowed for a detached house in the confronting zone at the front or side street setback line determined under Article 59-4.

The Property is zoned CRT and confronts established single-family detached residential uses in the R-60 zone across Forston Street and Glenville Road. The R-60 zone allows for building heights of up to 35 feet. The required side setback for the proposed development from Forston Street and Glenville Road is zero feet. The proposed building is set back a minimum of 25 feet from those roadways and building height in this portion of the Site is limited to no more than 45 feet (in accordance with specific recommendations of the Sector Plan). The configuration of the development proposal relative to the existing, confronting single-family residential development, creates a height relationship that satisfies the requirement. Conformance with this requirement will be further evaluated at the time of site plan review.

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

The Property is identified as Site 10 in the *Long Branch Sector Plan* and Site 14 in the associated *Design Guidelines*, with specific redevelopment recommendations for it. The Sketch Plan conforms with these recommendations as follows:

⁶ The Sketch Plan provides 19 of 148 units as MPDUs, equating to approximately 12.84% MPDUs.

⁷ The 2013 Long Branch Sector Plan limits the maximum building height to 45 feet proximate to Forston Street and 60 feet for the remainder of the Property.

Community

- i. *Provide diverse housing types to serve mixed income and special populations.*

The Sketch Plan replaces an existing commercial use and surface parking with a new multifamily residential building with up to 148 units, including a minimum of 12.5 % MPDUs. This will be a new residential use on the Property that has served commercial uses since it was originally developed approximately 60 years ago.

- ii. *Design sites to encourage physical activity and support pedestrian friendly, street-oriented development.*

The Sketch Plan proposes new housing, and the design includes new sidewalks on all frontages and a separated bicycle lane along University Boulevard. Three existing vehicular access points to the Property are consolidated to a single access point. By consolidating vehicle access, the number of potential conflict points between drivers, pedestrians and cyclists is reduced, making the Property safer for all modes of circulation. The Proposal will make frontage enhancements proximate to Carroll Avenue to accommodate MCDOT's funded bicycle lane installation to progress as envisioned by the County. These pedestrian and bicycle improvements will help enable access from the Property to the two nearby Purple Line Stations, each approximately one-third of a mile away. The Project will also include on-site recreational amenities, with specifics to be determined through a future site plan application.

- iii. *Incorporate public art and other gateway features into new development.*

Public art is not provided with the Sketch Plan. However, the general location and architectural concept for the proposed building's northeast corner allow for the building itself and its lobby space step forward as gateway-style features. The conceptual design for the residential lobby at this corner includes a high degree of transparency allowing for visual interplay and activation between the lobby and street. The stepping up of the building's height and change in architectural styles of its two wings at this point serves as a visual transition from the residential uses to the north, and institutional and commercial uses south of the Property.

- iv. *Provide well-designed streetscapes along Piney Branch Road and Carroll Avenue.*

The Property is not proximate to Piney Branch Road. This portion of the criterion is not applicable to this Sketch Plan.

Plans for the Property's Carroll Avenue streetscape improvements are being coordinated with the funded MCDOT bicycle lane construction project on Carroll

Avenue. The Sketch Plan incorporates appropriate frontage elements for Carroll Avenue, including adequate space for sidewalks, street trees, and MCDOT's bicycle lanes. Streetscape layout and planned elements will be further evaluated with this Proposal's preliminary plan and site plan applications.

- v. *Provide appropriate transitions towards existing single-family neighborhoods.*

The Sector Plan includes specific criteria for the redevelopment of the Property to provide appropriate transitions toward the existing single-family neighborhood confronting it across Forston Street and Glenville Road. This includes limiting the height of a new building to no more than 45 feet, proximate to the northern property boundary, and allowing for greater building height in the remainder of the Property. The Sketch Plan respects the height limitation and provides more than adequate space between the proposed northern wing of the building and Forston Street to allow for the installation of trees and landscape screening. The rectangular shape and brick cladding of the northern building wing is also specifically designed to be sympathetic to and respectful of the adjacent neighborhood.

Land Use and Zoning

- i. *Preserve space on-site for small neighborhood retail and service uses that cater to the community's various income levels.*

The Sketch Plan proposes a residential use to replace the existing commercial use of the Property. The new building will be located approximately one-third of a mile from existing retail plazas and service establishments located proximate to the Purple Line Piney Branch Station and multiple shopping plazas adjacent to the Takoma Langley Station.

Mobility

- i. *Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods, transit, and community facilities.*

The Sketch Plan proposes to add up to 148 multifamily residential units within close proximity to the Purple Line and make sidewalk improvements on all frontages. Bicycle lanes will be provided along the Property's University Boulevard frontage in coordination with the Purple Line project. Site design along the Property's Carroll Avenue frontage will be coordinated with MCDOT to allow for the County's installation of a new bicycle lane on Carroll Avenue. Coordination and design of frontage elements will continue through the preliminary and site plan processes.

- ii. *Provide bicycle parking at this site.*

The Proposal is required to provide long- and short-term bicycle parking in accordance with Section 59.6.2 of the Zoning Ordinance, with the final number of spaces to be determined with a future site plan. Based on the 148 units proposed with this Sketch Plan, 74 bicycle parking spaces are required, with 95 percent of those spaces to be long-term bicycle parking, and remainder for short-term bicycle parking. Long-term bicycle parking is proposed in a room internal to the building's parking structure. Short-term spaces must be provided in a convenient location proximate to the building's entrance.

Sustainability

- i. *Provide a vegetated buffer between proposed mixed-use development and existing residential development.*

The proposed development is residential in character and confronts existing residential development across Forston Street and Glenville Road. Adequate space is shown in between the proposed building footprint and these adjacent roadways to allow for planting of street trees and additional trees and landscaping to serve as a vegetated buffer between the new residential building and existing single-family homes.

Environmental Recommendations

The Sketch Plan incorporates strategies for the redevelopment proposal to yield measurable environmental improvements on the Property in-line with the goals of the Sector Plan. Specifically, the Proposal will reduce the amount of existing impervious surface on the Property by placing most parking internal to the proposed building, adding open space and providing space for landscaping and planting. Stormwater management will be introduced to the Property, where none currently exists. Stormwater controls include substantial green roof cover on the proposed building and microbio retention at the ground level. The Applicant also explored the use of pervious pavement for proposed surface parking spaces but determined soils underlying the Property would not be supportive of this tool. Also in-line with the Sector Plan's environmental recommendations, the Applicant is seeking public benefit points for the provision of public open space, incorporation of a robust vegetated green roof and cool roof and designing the building to surpass County energy efficiency requirements.

Furthermore, conditions of approval recommended herein would require the applicant to incorporate planting techniques, such as interconnected tree panels, that maximize soil volumes per tree and enhance their survivability.

A comprehensive noise analysis report is required at the time of preliminary plan review to assess and mitigate the potential impact of abutting high-volume road noise and Purple Line noise on the new development.

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

The Sketch Plan proposes to replace an existing commercial building surrounding by surface parking with a multifamily residential building, internal structured parking, limited surface parking and landscaping. While a mix of new uses is not proposed, the residential-only character of the Proposal is permissive in the CRT zone and is consistent with the goals of the *Long Branch Sector Plan*.

c) Encourage development that integrates a combination of housing types, mobility options, commercial services, and public facilities and amenities, where parking is prohibited between the building and the street.

No parking is provided between the proposed building and surrounding roadways. As noted in Finding 1.a. above, the Sketch Plan proposes a residential-only development, to include multiple unit sizes and MPDUs, within walking distance of two future Purple Line Stations and multiple commercial shopping plazas. The development will also have direct access to new bicycle lanes on University Boulevard and Carroll Avenue.

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

The *Long Branch Sector Plan* identifies the Subject Property as Development Site No. 10 and includes a series of specific recommendations to guide its redevelopment. A key recommendation included therein is to limit building height proximate to Forston Street to a maximum of 45 feet, to ensure compatibility between any new building and the existing homes. The Sketch Plan conforms with this height limitation by limiting the height of the northern wing (Wing B) of the new building to less than 45 feet. It also proposes to utilize red brick as a primary façade material on this section of the building, which is in-line with brick facades of many of the nearby existing residences.

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

The proposal is solely residential in character and will expand housing opportunities in the Long Branch neighborhood, within close proximity to public transportation options and access to employment centers.

f) Standardize optional method development by establishing minimum requirements for the provision of public benefits that will support and accommodate density above the standard method limit.

The Sketch Plan provides for more than the minimum required 50 public benefit points from a minimum of three categories to achieve the desired incentive density above the standard method limit. The final public benefit package and points will be determined at the time of Site Plan.

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

The Sketch Plan substantially conforms with the recommendations of the 2013 *Long Branch Sector Plan* as discussed in Finding 1.a. above.

3. Satisfy any development plan or schematic development plan in effect on October 29, 2014;

The Sketch Plan is not subject to a development plan or schematic development plan. This criterion is not applicable to this Application.

4. under Section 7.7.1.B.5, for a property where the zoning classification on October 29, 2014 was the result of a Local Map Amendment, satisfy any green area requirement in effect on October 29, 2014; any green area under this provision includes and is not in addition to any open space requirement of the property's zoning on October 30, 2014;

This criterion is not applicable to this Sketch Plan as the Property's zoning on October 29, 2014, was not the result of a Local Map Amendment.

5. Achieve compatible internal and external relationships between existing and pending nearby development;

As discussed in Findings 1.a and 1.d, the Sketch Plan proposes a new residential building and site design that is compatible with its neighborhood context. Ongoing and pending nearby development is limited to Purple Line improvements and MCDOT's Carroll Avenue bicycle lane construction project. The Applicant will continue to coordinate with the Purple Line and MCDOT to refine frontage designs through the preliminary and site plan processes to ensure

compatibility with those public transportation improvement projects. The most recently approved site plan proximate to the Subject Property is for the Park Montgomery residential expansion project (Site Plan No. 820220020) located approximately one-half mile to the north on Piney Branch Road.

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

As conditioned, the Sketch Plan incorporates a generally satisfactory access, circulation, parking and loading design for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians. The building's main pedestrian lobby is proximate to the intersection of Forston Street and University Boulevard and includes sidewalk access to both streets. Secondary pedestrian access is provided at the rear of the building to serve surface parking spaces. Bicycle access to and from the Site will be improved through bicycle lanes to be provided along the Site's University Boulevard frontage by this Project, and by the County's addition of new bicycle lanes on Carroll Avenue.

Vehicular and loading access is consolidated to a single point at Glenville Road. From that point, an internal driveway splits to provide access to the northern parking structure in Wing B of the building, and to provide access to surface parking, loading space and internal parking structure under Wing A of the building. The Sketch Plan proposes 115 total vehicular parking spaces.

Final detailed design of site access, circulation, parking and loading will be reviewed at the time of preliminary and site plan review.

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

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

For the proposed development, the Zoning Ordinance requires at least 50 points in three categories. The Applicant proposes to exceed the 50-point requirement utilizing four categories. Although at the time of Sketch Plan review only an outline of public benefits needs to be approved, the following table shows both the categories and points for the public benefits requested at Sketch Plan to demonstrate the project's ability to meet the

requirement to provide sufficient benefit points. A final public benefits package and final points will be reviewed with a future site plan application.

Table 2: Public Benefit Points Proposed

Public Benefit	Maximum Points Allowed	Proposed
Transit Proximity – Level 2	10	10
Connectivity and Mobility		
Minimum Parking	10	5
Quality Building and Site Design		
Architectural Elevations	20	10
Exceptional Design	10	10
Public Open Space	20	4
Structured Parking	20	15
Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment		
Cool Roof	10	2
Energy Conservation and Generation	15	15
Vegetated Roof	15	15
Total Points	50 (required)	86

TRANSIT PROXIMITY

Transit Proximity points are granted for proximity to existing or master-planned transit stops based on transit service level in certain zones, including the CRT zone in which the Subject Property is located. Public benefit points for Transit Proximity can only be granted for one transit stop. Transit Proximity is categorized according to three levels.

The Property is fully within one-quarter to one-half mile of both the Piney Branch Purple Line Station and the Takoma-Langley Purple Line Station and provides Level 2 Transit Proximity. The Applicant requests ten points for providing Level 2 Transit Proximity. Staff supports the request for ten public benefit points for Transit Proximity, with final points to be determined at the time of site plan review.

CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY

Minimum Parking

The Applicant requests five points for providing fewer than the maximum allowed number of parking spaces. Points for this incentive are granted on a sliding scale from no points for providing maximum allowable number of on-site spaces to ten points for providing no more than the minimum numbers of spaces on-site. Staff supports the category at this time.

QUALITY BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

Architectural Elevations

The Applicant requests 10 public benefit points for providing high-quality architectural elevations that include binding design elements approved with the Sketch Plan. These binding elements include a minimum percentage of transparency on the ground floor, maximum separation between operable doors and incorporation of design priorities of the Sector Plan. Given this Property's general configuration and slope, the residential nature of the Proposal, and use of most of the ground level of the building for structured parking, the binding elements of ground floor transparency and doorway spacing are primarily applicable to the building's main lobby space. The design priorities of the Sector Plan are applicable to the entirety of the design and are reflected in the Sketch Plan.

The provision of well-proportioned and attractive architectural elevations is particularly significant at this highly visible Site that fronts on four streets, including University Boulevard and the Purple Line corridor. Staff supports 10 public benefit points for Architectural Elevations, with final points to be determined at site plan review.

Exceptional Design

Up to 10 public benefit points can be awarded for a building or site design whose visual and functional impacts exceptionally enhance the character of a setting. The Applicant requests 10 points for Exceptional Design for the provision of a building and site design that are innovative and responsive to the Property's context and will enhance the public realm in an original manner. Staff supports the category at this time, with final points to be determined at the time of site plan review.

Public Open Space

The Applicant requests four points for providing more than the minimum area of public open space otherwise required. To qualify for public benefit points, the public open space area must meet certain criteria as defined in the *Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines*. Based on the Property's size, zoning and number of frontages, the Project must provide a minimum of 10 percent of the site area as public open space. The Sketch Plan proposes approximately 12 percent of the site area as public open space, exceeding the minimum requirement. Staff supports the category at this time with the final review of design and criteria and determination of points at the time of site plan.

Structured Parking

Up to 20 public benefit points can be awarded for placement of vehicle parking in an above or below grade parking structure. The Applicant requests 15 points for providing the majority of the development's vehicle parking in a combination of above and below grade parking structures. A small

percentage of the overall parking is provided on a surface lot. Staff supports the category at this time, with final points to be determined at the time of site plan review.

PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Cool Roof

The Applicant requests two points for proposing to provide, on all non-green roof roof-surfaces, a cool roof that will collectively meet or exceed a solar reflective index (SRI) of 75. Staff supports the subcategory at this time with details to be addressed at the time of site plan.

Energy Conservation

The Applicant requests 15 points for proposing to exceed energy efficiency standards by 17.5 %. Points are granted based on the percentage exceeding the efficiency standard. Staff supports the subcategory at this time with details to be addressed at the time of site plan.

Vegetated Roof

The Applicant requests fifteen points for providing a vegetated roof with a soil depth of at least four inches covering at least 33 % of the building's roof. The Sketch Plan shows the majority of building roof area to be covered by a vegetated roof. Staff supports the subcategory at this time with details to be addressed at the time of site plan.

- 8. Establish a feasible and appropriate provisional phasing plan for all structures, uses, rights-of-way, sidewalks, dedications, public benefits, and future preliminary and site plan applications.**

The Sketch Plan proposes a single phase for development.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

As conditioned, the Sketch Plan application satisfies the findings under Sections 59.7.3.3 and the applicable standards of the Zoning Ordinance, and substantially conforms to the recommendations of the 2013 *Long Branch Sector Plan*. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Sketch Plan with the conditions specified at the beginning of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Sketch Plan

Attachment B: Agency Letters

Attachment C: Affidavit Regarding Community Meeting and Meeting Minutes