

WESTWOOD SHOPPING CENTER
SITE PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 82018019A

Description

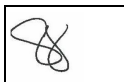
The Applicant proposes to modify a previously approved multifamily building to reduce the ground floor commercial use by 18,792 square feet, redesign the original below-grade parking to entirely above-grade parking that the multifamily units will wrap, modify building elevations and changes to location of transformers, loading, and garage access.

COMPLETED: 5/2/2025

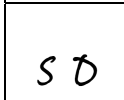
PLANNING BOARD HEARING DATE: 5/15/2025

MCPB ITEM NO. 8

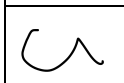
Planning Staff



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LOCATION/ADDRESS

5400 Westbard Avenue

MASTER PLAN

2016 *Westbard Sector Plan*

ZONE

CRT-2.0, C-0.75, R-1.25, H-60

PROPERTY SIZE

12.4 acres

APPLICANT

GDE (Greystar Development East, LLC)

ACCEPTANCE DATE

February 5, 2025

REVIEW BASIS

Chapter 59

Summary:

- In 2019, the Planning Board approved Site Plan No. 820180190 to allow a maximum density of 540,524 square feet of total development, including 369,292 square feet of residential uses and 171,232 square feet of non-residential uses. The Site Plan comprises a commercial building, a multifamily building with 200 units and ground floor commercial space, and 70 townhouse units.
- The commercial building is complete (newly opened Giant Food Store), and the Applicant is currently constructing the townhouses.
- The Site Plan Amendment is specific to the multifamily building, to allow a reduction in the ground floor commercial and design changes to the parking, garage and loading access, and building elevations.
- The original Site Plan approval required public open space and dedication of parkland, which remains unaffected by this Amendment.

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SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS

SITE PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 82018019A

Staff recommends approval of Site Plan Amendment No. 82018019A, to allow the reduction of commercial density by 18,792 square feet, relocation of parking, and changes to the loading and garage access, building elevations, and the transformers' location. The development must comply with the conditions of approval for Preliminary Plan No. 120170170 as listed in MCPB Resolution No. 19-032 dated May 6, 2019, as amended and Site Plan No. 820180190 as listed in MCPB Resolution No. 19-033. All site development elements shown on the latest electronic version of the Site Plan, as of the date of this Staff Report submitted via ePlans to the M-NCPPC, are required except as modified by the following conditions.¹ The following Conditions 1, 22, and 25 modify the previously approved conditions, and Condition 26 is in addition to all other conditions, which remain in full force and effect:

Modified Conditions

- Density

1. The Site Plan is limited to a maximum of ~~540,524~~ 521,732 square feet of total development on the Subject Property, including 369,292 square feet of residential uses, for up to 200 multi-family units and 70 townhouse units, and ~~171,232~~ 152,440 square feet of non-residential uses.
- Fire and Rescue

22. The Planning Board accepts the recommendations of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS), Fire Department Access and Water Supply Section in its letters dated February 14, 2019, and March 10, 2025, and hereby incorporates them as conditions of approval. The Applicant must comply with each of the recommendations as set forth in the letters, which MCDPS may amend if the amendments do not conflict with other conditions of ~~Preliminary Site Plan~~ approval.
- Certified Site Plan

25. Before approval of the Certified Site Plan, the following revisions must be made and/or information provided, subject to Staff review and approval:

 - a. Provide an interim access plan during construction to ensure continuous and uninterrupted access to the adjacent Kenwood Place Condominium property.
 - b. Include the stormwater management concept approval letter and other applicable agency letters, development program, Preliminary Plan, and Site Plan resolutions on the approval or cover sheet(s).
 - c. Add a note to the Site Plan stating that "M-NCPPC Staff must inspect all tree-save areas and protection devices before clearing and grading."

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.

- d. Add a note stating that “Minor modifications to the limits of disturbance shown on the site plan within the public right-of-way for utility connections may be done during the review of the right-of-way permit drawings by the Department of Permitting Services.”
- e. Modify data table to reflect development standards approved by the Planning Board.
- f. Clarify the graphics of all applicable sheets to clearly distinguish the existing trees to remain, existing trees to be removed and, new plantings.
- g. Ensure consistency of all details and layout between Site, Landscape plans, Architectural sheets, and the FFCP.
- h. Illustrate on the Landscape Plan the extent of all the plantings in and along the grass swale.
- i. Provide additional permeable pavement and buffer swale improvements on-site.
- j. Remove the artificial turf within the Civic Green and replace with grass.
- k. Revise Final Forest Conservation Plan Redline and applicable sheets to reflect layout changes.
- l. Revise Landscaping Plans to clarify plantings around updated stormwater management areas.

New Condition

Transportation

26. The Planning Board has reviewed and accepts the recommendations of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services Right-of-Way Section (DPS-ROW) in its memo dated March 17, 2025, and incorporates them as conditions of approval. The Applicant must comply with each of the recommendations in their memo, which DPS-ROW may amend if the amendments do not conflict with other conditions of Site Plan approval.

SECTION 2: SITE DESCRIPTION

VICINITY

The neighborhoods surrounding the Subject Property to the north and west include the single-family community of Springfield and the multi-family garden apartments of Kenwood Place. The Residences at Capital Crescent Trail and Westwood Tower Apartments, high-rise apartment buildings, are located to the south and east of the Property. Westland Middle School is located directly southwest of the Property, along with other institutional uses further south, including the Little Flower Catholic Church and the Little Falls Library. Light industrial uses are located predominately to the south and east of the Subject Property, and directly to the east are office and retail uses, including the American Plant Food Company, the Roof Center, and a McDonald’s restaurant.

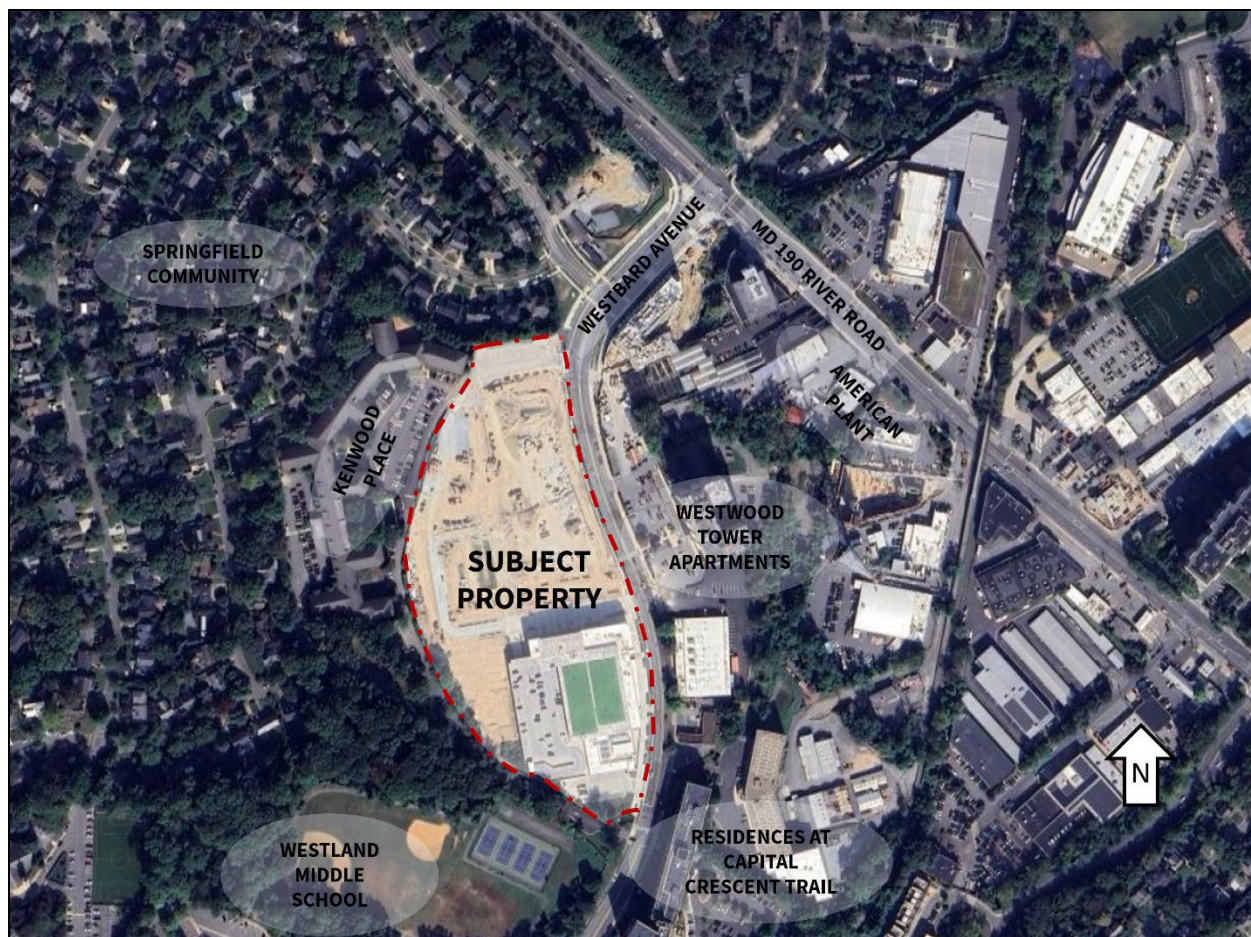


Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Subject Property has a tract area of approximately 540,524 square feet or 12.4 acres and is currently under construction based on the approvals granted by the Planning Board in 2019 and further described below. Before the redevelopment approvals, the Property was developed with the Westwood Shopping Center, with several commercial businesses and surface parking. As shown in Figure 2, the private street network, commercial building (Giant Grocery Store with ground floor retail), Springfield Park, and the Civic Green have been constructed. The townhouses are currently under construction.

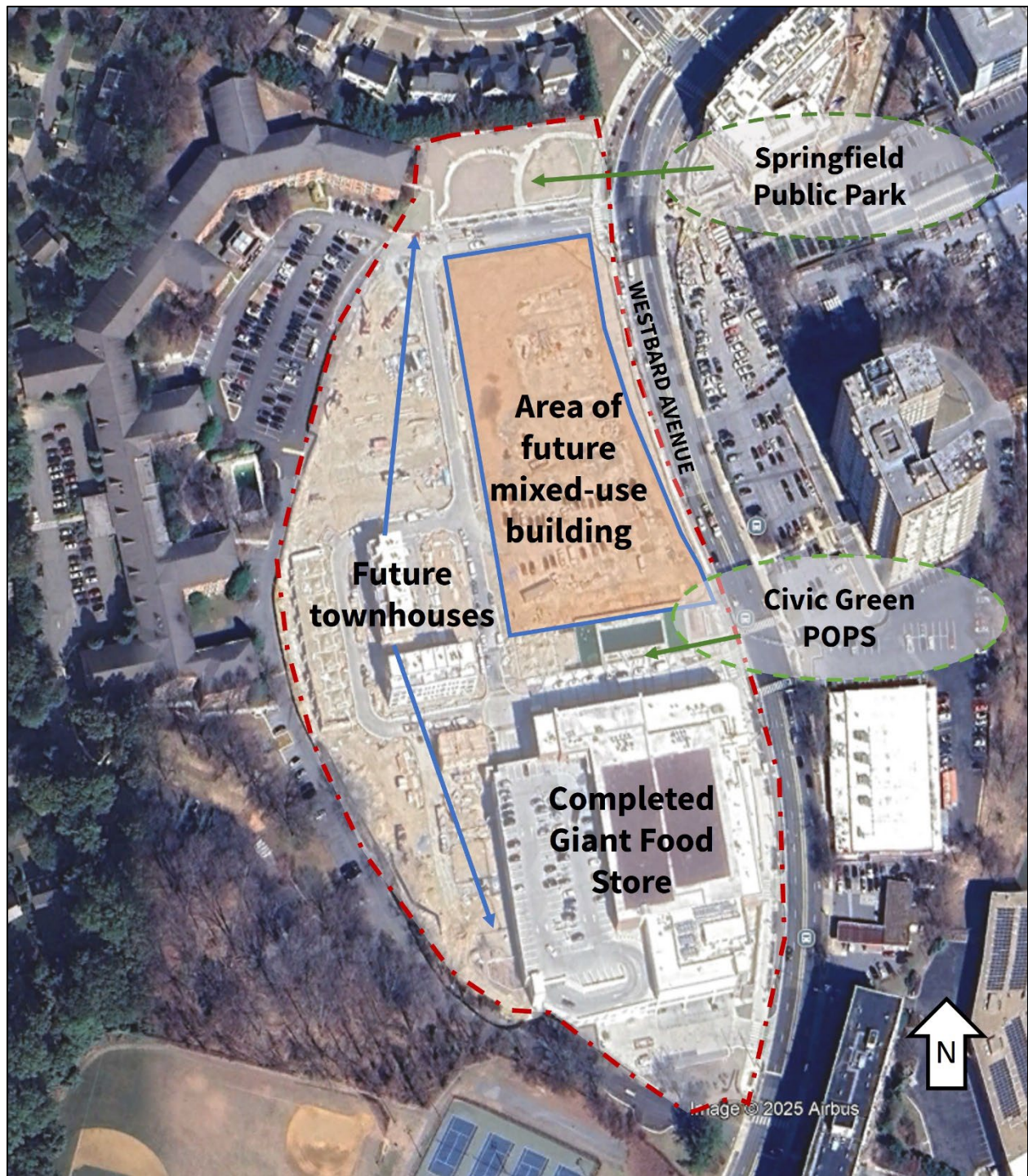


Figure 2 – Subject Property



Figure 3: Photo of current construction status, looking west from the Civic Green POPS and future multifamily site to the right.

SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PREVIOUS APPROVALS

In 2019, the Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan No. 120170170, Site Plan No. 820180190, and an associated Forest Conservation Plan. The Preliminary Plan covers a larger area that extends to River Road and is subject to other Site Plans for development. The approved Site Plan is specific to the 12.4-acre property highlighted in Figure 2. The Site Plan allows for a maximum density of 540,524 square feet of total development (standard method of development). It includes 369,292 square feet of residential uses for up to 200 multifamily units and 70 townhouse units, and 171,232 square feet of non-residential uses. As shown in Figure 4, the approved Site Plan comprises a multifamily building with ground floor retail and a commercial building fronting on Westbard Avenue, as well as 70 townhouses located on the western half of the Property, accessed by internal private streets. The Site Plan has two open spaces; the Springfield Neighborhood Green Urban Park is located at the northern portion of the Property fronting on Westbard Avenue, which is subject to Park Construction Permit

2023-004, and a privately owned public open space (POPS), the Civic Green, which is located between the Multifamily Building and the Commercial Building.

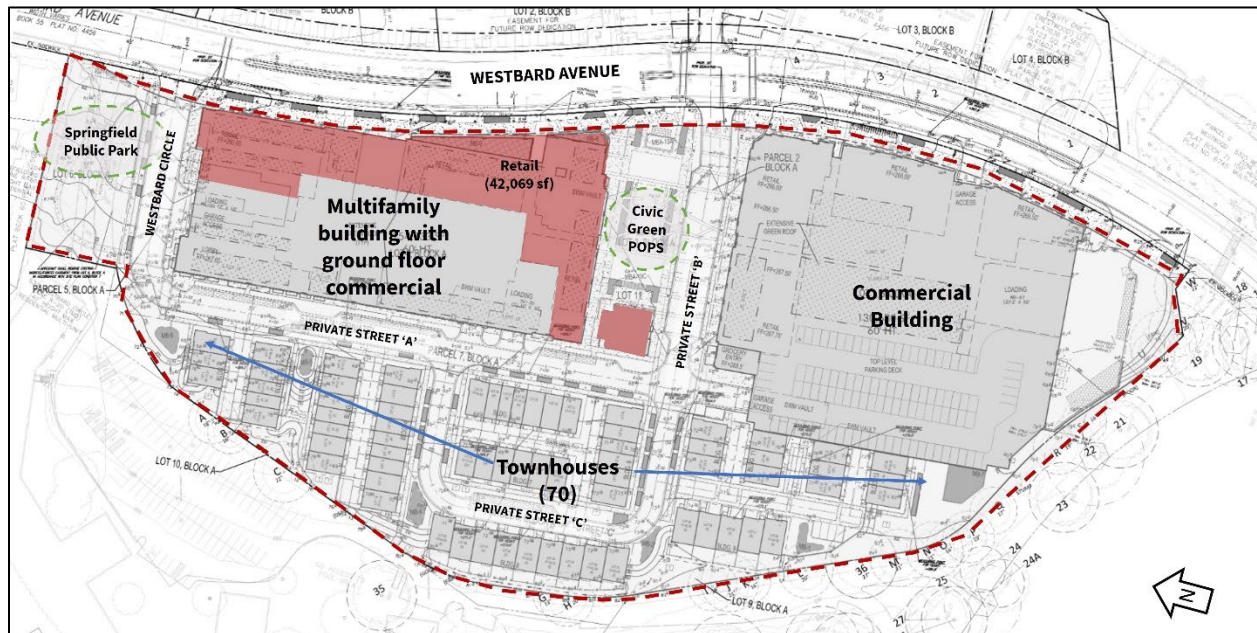


Figure 4 – Illustrative Site Plan No. 820180190

The multifamily building, which is the subject of this Site Plan Amendment No. 82018019A, was approved for a maximum height of 60 feet for 200 multifamily units (with 12.5% MPDUs) and 42,069 square feet of ground-floor commercial space. It features loading and below-grade garage access for the multifamily units located off Westbard Circle, as well as loading and access for the retail located off Private Street A. Adjacent to the Multifamily building next to Private Street B is the Civic Green, which also includes a one-story retail building.

PROPOSAL

The Applicant proposes to reduce the amount of commercial space on the ground floor of the multifamily building by 18,792 square feet (for a maximum of 23,277 square feet of commercial), relocate the multifamily building's structured parking from partially below-grade to entirely above-grade, with the multifamily units and ground floor commercial wrapping the above-grade parking levels, and update the exterior elevations of the building due to the programming changes.

This Amendment will also incorporate minor site changes made throughout the Subject Property to reflect changes made during the grading and building permit process for the townhomes.

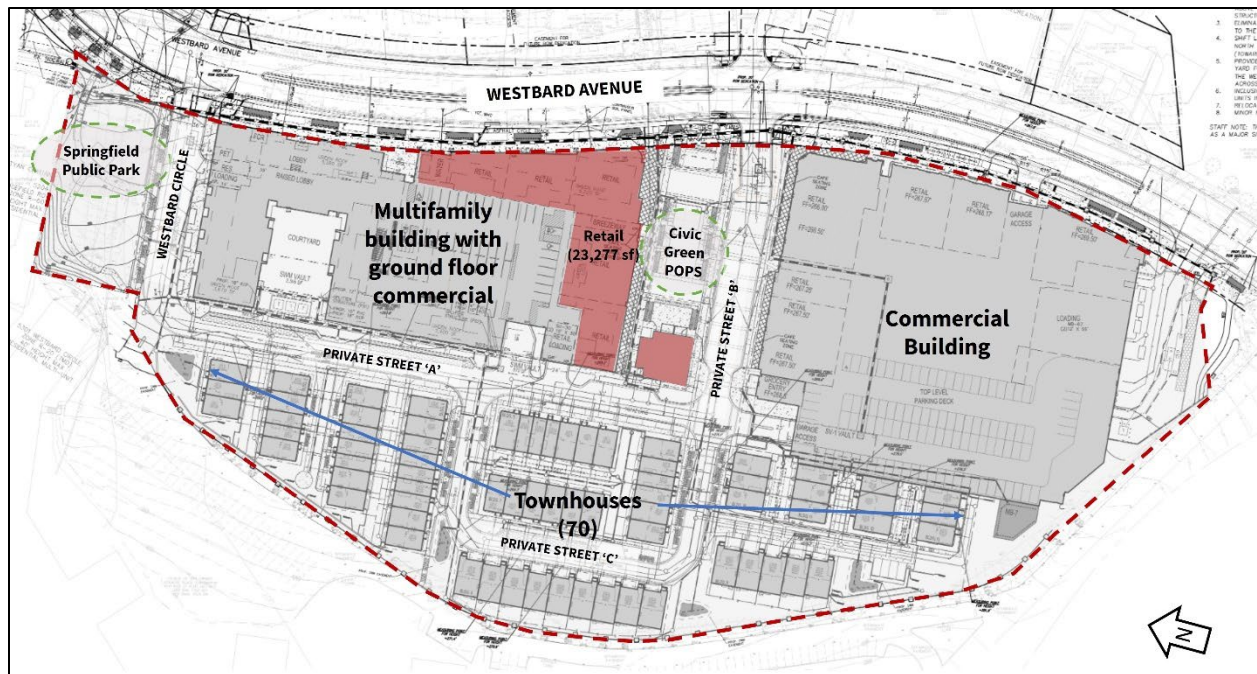


Figure 5 – Illustrative Site Plan No. 820180190A

BUILDING/ARCHITECTURE

The proposed programming changes within the Multifamily building will result in exterior changes to the elevations. This includes removal of the ground floor retail fronting Westbard Avenue at the corner of Westbard Circle, which is now proposed as the residential lobby. The remaining retail will continue to front on Westbard Avenue towards Private Street B and the Civic Green. The one-story retail building within the Civic Green remains unchanged with this Amendment. The Amendment also introduces a ground floor courtyard for the residents of the multifamily building, with two entrances from Private Street A, and relocates the transformers to line the street. The Applicant proposes to screen the transformers with decorative metal screening. At the base, the building has been designed with large retail storefronts, in keeping with the development standards as originally approved for transparency and door spacing. Above the base, the building will maintain a cementitious panel with windows and balconies; these materials and elements are similar to the original approval.

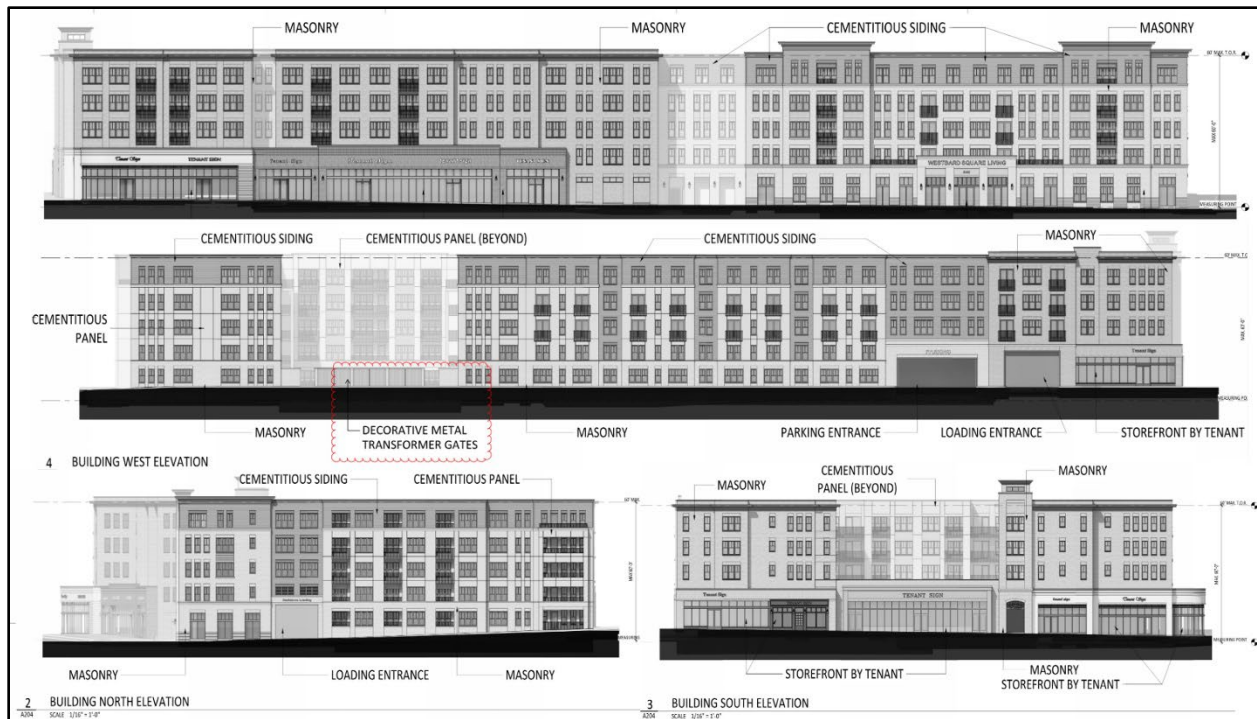


Figure 6 –Site Plan No. 820180190A proposed elevation changes for Multifamily building

OPEN SPACE

The open spaces, including the Civic Green POPS and Springfield Neighborhood Urban Park, remain largely unchanged from the original approval. This Site Plan Amendment incorporates final changes made through the Park Construction Permit process.

TRANSPORTATION

No major changes are proposed to the previously approved street sections, streetscape, or public right-of-way. The Amendment proposes to relocate the garage access from Westbard Circle to Private Street A and to shift the loading on Westbard Circle closer to Westbard Avenue.

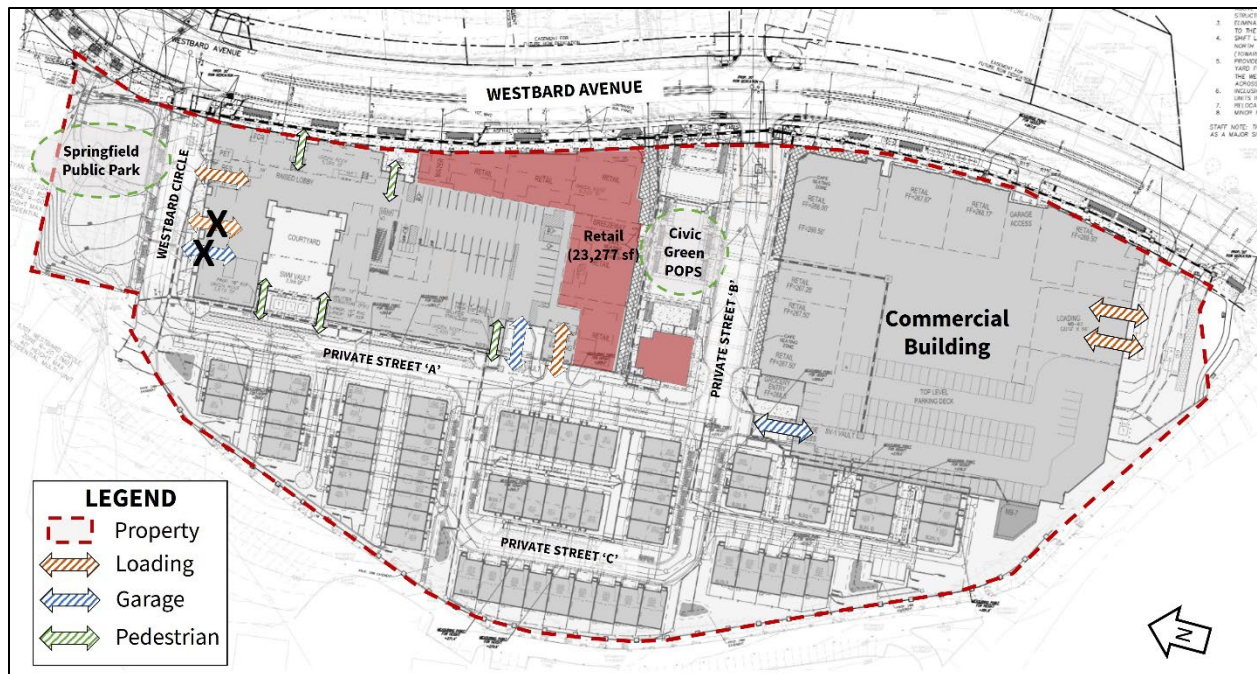


Figure 7 – Circulation Exhibit for Site Plan No. 82018019A

ENVIRONMENT

The Final Forest Conservation Plan (FFCP) for the 12.4-acre Property was certified on May 4, 2020. The Amendment has no material effect on the existing FFCP. However, a redline amendment plan has been submitted to document the final building footprints and related site features as required under a Final Forest Conservation Plan. The redlined FFCP will be revised per the conditions of approval to match the final Certified Site Plan.

SECTION 4: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Applicant has complied with all submittal and noticing requirements. While a pre-submittal public meeting is not required for a Major Site Plan Amendment, the Applicant held a community meeting on December 3, 2024. There were several concerns regarding the amount of parking provided by the project and the reduction in retail. The Applicant explained that the amount of parking that was originally proposed for the residential portion of the building remains unchanged (261 spaces); the reduction in parking is a result of the decrease in retail space proposed on the ground floor of the building. The Applicant explained that the Project was designed eight years ago, and the market has changed significantly since then, and that this reduction in retail will 'right-size' the Project's marketability and feasibility. Full meeting notes are included as Attachment E.

Staff received one email throughout the review of the Project, which also expressed concern regarding the reduction in retail proposed with the Project (Attachment D.)

SECTION 5: SITE PLAN 820180190 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Planning Board approved Site Plan No.820180190, MCPB No. 19-033, to allow a maximum density of 540,524 square feet of total development, including 369,292 square feet of residential uses for up to 200 multifamily units and 70 townhouse units, and 171,232 square feet of non-residential uses on the Subject Property with conditions.

Site Plan Amendment No. 82018019A requests to reduce the amount of previously approved ground floor commercial for the multi-use/multifamily building by 18,792 square feet, relocate parking from below grade to above grade, and change the loading and garage access points, building elevations, and transformers' locations. The proposed Site Plan Amendment does not alter the intent of the previous findings of Site Plan 820180190, which remain applicable, except as modified below.

2. To approve a Site Plan, the Planning Board must find that the proposed development:

c) satisfies applicable use standards, development standards, and general requirements under this Chapter;

Division 4.5.3 CRT Zone, Standard Method

i.

The Amendment does not alter any of the previously approved development standards for the multi-use/multifamily building, and the changes to the elevations will remain in conformance with the development standards as previously approved. As shown in Table 1 below, the Amendment will reduce the amount of non-residential density allowed by the Project that was to be located within the multi-use/multifamily building, resulting in a decrease in required and proposed parking spaces, however the decrease in parking remains in conformance with the standards of Section 59-6 of the Zoning Ordinance for Standard Method development.

Table 1: Westwood Shopping Center Site Plan No. 82018019A Data Table

Section 59-4	Development Standard	Permitted/ Required	Approved 820180190	Proposed 82018019A
	Tract Area, square feet (acres) Proposed ROW Dedication Previous ROW Dedication Site Area, square feet (acres)	n/a n/a n/a n/a	540,524 sf (12.4 ac) 23,844 sf 20,584 sf 496,096 sf (11.38 ac)	No Change Proposed
4.5.3.C.2	Maximum Density (FAR/SF) CRT-2.0, C-0.75, R-1.25 H-60' Residential Non-Residential TOTAL	n/a n/a 1.0/540,524	0.68/369,292 0.31/171,232 1.0/540,524	0.68/369,292 0.28/152,440 0.97/521,732
	Vehicular Parking spaces (units) minimum/maximum² Multi-Use/Multi-Family Building³ Studio-market rate units Studio-MPDU 1 Bedroom- market rate units 1 Bedroom-MPDU 2 Bedrooms-market rate units 2 Bedrooms-MPDU 3 Bedrooms-market rate units Retail/Service Establishment ² TOTAL	1 space/unit 269/396	(20) 20/20 (3) 3/3 (96) 96/120 (14) 7/18 (55) 55/83 (8) 4/12 (4) 4/8 (41,065 sf) 144/247 420⁸	(31) 31/31 (5) 3/5 (95) 95/119 (14) 7/18 (44) 44/66 (6) 3/9 (5) 5/10 (23,000 sf) 81/138 390⁸
	Bicycle Parking spaces (long term/short term) Multi-Use/Multi-Family Building Residential Retail/Service Establishment TOTAL	95/5 1/4 96/9	(200 Units) 95/5 (42,069 sf) 1/4 96/9	(200 Units) 95/5 (23,277 sf) 1/4 96/9

Division 59-6 General Development Standards

(1) Division 6.1 Site Access

The Project as approved created a private street network with access from Westbard Avenue for Westbard Circle and Private Streets A, B, and C. The

² Gross leasable area is used for determining the required parking for retail/service establishments in accordance with Section 59-6.2.4.B. which requires 3.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of leasable area.

³ The Site Plan is within a Reduced Parking Area, the baseline parking minimum for the MPDUs is reduced by the adjustment factor of 0.50 in accordance with Section 59-6.2.3.I.2.b. of the Zoning Ordinance.

⁸ Parking for multi-family units to be leased separately from units and finalized at the time of building permit.

Amendment will not change any of the private street network form Westbard Avenue, nor the design of the private streets, or streetscape. The multi-use/multifamily building will be accessed from the private road network as originally approved.

(2) *Division 6.2 Parking, Queuing and Loading*

The Amendment will reduce the amount of non-residential square footage allowed by the Project, which will be located within the multi-use/multifamily building, resulting in a reduced amount of required and proposed parking spaces, however the decrease in parking remains in conformance with the standards of Section 59-6 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The Project was originally approved with two separate garage access points, one for the retail and one for the multifamily units. The Amendment will consolidate the garage access for the multifamily portion of the building from Westbard Circle to utilize the same garage access point for the retail on Private Street 'A'. The Amendment maintains two separate loading bays, one for the retail and one for the multifamily units. The loading for the multifamily units has shifted on Westbard Circle and has been reviewed to ensure safe and adequate turning movements into and out of the building and allow adequate space for loading activities within the building.

(3) *Division 6.3 Open Space and Recreation*

There are no changes proposed to the previously approved amount of public open space, the Springfield Neighborhood Green Urban Park, and the Civic Green. The Amendment provides an update to the design of the Springfield Neighborhood Green Urban Park, which was finalized through the Park Construction Permit process as originally conditioned. The Civic Green design largely remains unchanged as well. The Amendment has updated the required recreational facilities per Section 59-6.3.9 for the multifamily building, and the Project has been conditioned to finalize the amenities on the Certified Site Plan. The Amendment will maintain adequate, safe, and efficient recreational facilities.

(4) *Division 6.4 General Landscaping and Outdoor lighting*

The proposed landscaping and outdoor lighting remain in keeping with the standards of the Zoning Ordinance. Due to the change in loading, the Amendment will provide one additional street tree on Westbard Circle and plant beds within the new courtyard area.

e) Provides safe, well-integrated parking, circulation patterns, building massing and, where required, open spaces and site amenities;

As previously described, there are no changes proposed to the open space and amenities. The change in parking from partially below grade to entirely above grade will continue to be screened by the uses on the exterior of the building. The changes to loading and garage access have been reviewed and will provide safe and adequate turning movements into and out of the building and allow adequate space for loading activities within the building. The Amendment will continue to provide safe, well-integrated parking, circulation patterns, building massing, and open space and amenities.

SECTION 6: CONCLUSION

As conditioned, Site Plan Amendment No. 82108019A satisfies the findings under Sections 59-7.3.3 & 7.3.4 and the applicable standards of the Zoning Ordinance, and substantially conforms to the recommendations of the 2016 *Westbard Sector Plan*. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the Site Plan Amendment with the conditions specified at the beginning of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Site Plan

Attachment B: Prior Approvals

Attachment C: Agency Letters

Attachment D: Community Correspondence

Attachment E: Community Meeting and Meeting Minutes