

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Christopher R. Conklin *Director*

September 9, 2025

Mr. Tsaiquan Gatling, Planner III West County Planning Division The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission 2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902

> RE: Amended Preliminary Plan Letter Plan No.11999039A Friendship Commons (Geico)

Dear Mr. Gatling:

We have completed our review of the amended Preliminary Plan uploaded in eplans on July 29, 2025. This plan was reviewed by the Development Review Committee on July 15, 2025, and is scheduled to be heard at the October 23, 2025, Planning Board meeting. Prior to, or concurrent with, submitting a future Site Plan, the Applicant must submit a Preliminary Plan Amendment which addresses the following:

Preliminary Plan Significant Comments

- All previous conditions outlined in the MCDOT letters dated February 1, 1999, February 4, 1999, and February 9, 1999, remain in effect and will be reviewed during future preliminary plan amendments. The applicant must provide supporting documentation if any of these conditions are proposed to be revised or removed.
- 2. The current plans do not comply with Montgomery County Chapter 49 requirements or current standards; future amendments must be revised to meet applicable code.
- Improvements within county-maintained rights-of-way, including frontage improvements, will be determined during future preliminary plan amendments following review of the plan and associated documents.
- 4. A minimum 10-foot-wide public utility easement must be provided along the property frontage.
- 5. The applicant must contact the District of Columbia Department of Transportation regarding improvements along Western Avenue.

- 6. The applicant is seeking to amend a previous Preliminary Plan, which was approved following adoption of the Friendship Heights Sector Plan in 1998. The original approval included prior stipulations and conditions. These conditions were originally intended to be implemented through what was then referred as the Traffic Mitigation Agreement (TMAg), which has since been replaced by the current Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan.
 - In light of this, we recommend a new TDM Plan for this project, provided that the recommendations and TDM measures specified in the earlier MNCPPC and MCDOT correspondences are integrated into the current plan. These measures are intended to support the owner/applicant in the implementation of the revised TDM strategy and in achieving the project's targeted Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS) goal.

Building on these requirements, the TDM provisions outlined in County Code 42A-26 are applicable to this development project application. Any owner or applicant proposing a new development or construction project within a Transportation Management District (TMD), including applications for subdivision, optional method development, site plan, conditional use, or building permit, must obtain approval from the Department for a Project-Based TDM Plan.

An owner or applicant for a development located in a District in a **Red Policy Area** must submit a **Level 3 Project-based TDM Results Plan** for a project with more than 40,000 gross square feet. The Friendship Commons (Geico) project, located in the Friendship Heights TMD and Red Policy Area, proposes to develop more than 40,000 gsf. The Level 3 TDM Results Plan must be approved by MCDOT and submitted **prior to issuance of any building permit by DPS**.

A Level 3 TDM Results Plan requires a commitment by the owner or applicant to achieve a project Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS) goal of 44%, which is 5% higher than the base Plan 39% NADMS goal for the Friendship Heights TMD, and related commuting goals for that project. The Level 3 TDM Results Plan must be approved by MCDOT and submitted prior to issuance of any building permit by DPS. Level 3 Project-Based TDM Results Plans require the following:

- i. Appoint a Transportation Coordinator (a person to work with MCDOT and TMD representatives to achieve NADMS and other commuting goals);
- ii. Notify the Department of the Coordinator's contact information within 30 days of receipt of final use and occupancy (U&O) certificate;
- iii. Provide space in the project for the promotion of TDM;
- iv. Display TDM-related information in highly visible location(s) visible to employees, residents and other project users;
- v. Select specific TDM actions to be implemented in order to achieve 5% higher than the base Plan (50% for employees/51% for residents) NADMS goal for the North Bethesda (White Flint 2 MP)

- vi. Conduct independent monitoring to determine if the project is meeting its goals, until the project's goals are achieved;
- vii. Additional and/or Substitution of Strategies: If strategies initially selected by the owner or applicant do not result in the project achieving goals by six (6) years after final occupancy, revisions to the plan or strategies initially selected may be required;
- viii. Additional Funding: Commit funding if the project does not achieve the goal within 6 years of final occupancy. Provide higher additional funding if the project has not achieved the goal within 8 years of final occupancy.

The Applicant shall coordinate with MCDOT Commuter Services Section (CSS) staff: Samuel Damesa at Samuel.Damesa@montgomerycountymd.gov or (240) 777-8384 to implement the aforementioned recommendations of the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan for the new development project.

Standard Plan Review Comments

- All Planning Board Opinions relating to this plan or any subsequent revision, project plans, or site
 plans should be submitted to the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services
 (MCDPS) in the package for record plans, storm drains, grading or paving plans, or applications
 for access permits. Include this letter and all other correspondence from this department.
- 2. The proposed driveway shall be per the Montgomery County standard.
- 3. Design all vehicular access points and alleys to be at-grade with the sidewalk, dropping down to street level between the sidewalk/sidepath and roadway.
- 4. Proposed on-street parking must be at least 35 feet away from the intersections with proper traffic signs per Montgomery County Code 31-17.
- 5. Upgrade pedestrian facilities at all intersections to comply with current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- 6. Steps, retaining walls, and door swings are not allowed into the county ROW, and private utility vaults are not permitted there.
- Sight Distance: Submit a completed, executed MCDOT Sight Distances Evaluation certification form, for all existing and proposed site entrances onto County-maintained roads, for our review and approval. Please use the link for the updated Sight Distance Form https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/Resources/Files/SightDistanceForm.pdf
- Storm Drain Analysis: Submit a storm drain study for the portion of the subject site draining to the Montgomery County public storm drain system. Please see checklist https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/Resources/Files/StormDrainRevChecklist.pdf

- 9. The applicant shall be responsible for relocating utilities along existing roads to accommodate the applicant's required roadway improvements.
- 10. If the proposed development will alter or impact any existing County maintained transportation system management component and systems (i.e., traffic signals, signal poles, hand boxes, Accessible pedestrian signals, surveillance cameras, etc.) or communication component (i.e., traffic signal interconnect, fiber optic lines, etc.) in any way, the developer will be required to submit plans to relocate the impacted facilities. Please contact Mr. Kamal Hamud of our Transportation Systems Engineering Team at kamal.hamud@montgomerycountymd.gov or (240) 777-2190 for proper execution procedures. All costs associated with such relocations and/or modifications shall be the applicant's responsibility. The applicant will also be required to participate in upgrading traffic signals with Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) and ADA ramps.
- 11. Tree spacing and species in County ROW must comply with the applicable MCDOT standards. Tree planting within the public ROW must be coordinated with the MCDPS ROW Plan Review Section.
- 12. The Developer shall provide Erosion and sediment control measures as required by Chapter 19 and on-site stormwater management where applicable (at no cost to the County) at locations deemed necessary by the MCDPS and will comply with their specifications. Erosion and sediment control measures are to be built before the construction of streets, houses, and/or site grading. They are to remain in operation (including maintenance) as long as the MCDPS deems them necessary.
- 13. Enclosed storm drainage and/or engineered channel (in accordance with the MCDOT Storm Drain Design Criteria) within the County ROW and all drainage easements.
- 14. Posting of the ROW permit bond is a prerequisite to MCDPS approval of the record plat.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this preliminary plan. If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter, please contact Deepak Somarajan, our Development Review Team for this project, at deepak.somarajan@montgomerycountymd.gov or (240) 777-7170.

Sincerely,

Deepak Somarajan, Engineer III Development Review Team Office of Transportation Policy

SharePoint\teams\DOT\Director's Office\Transportation Policy\Development Review\Deepak\Preliminary Plan Plan\11999039A-Friendship Commons(Geico)\Letter\11999039A-Friendship Commons(Geico).docx

SharePoint Preliminary Plan

cc-e: Patrick LaVay MHG

Robert Harris Lerch, Early & Brewer, Chtd.

Carlos Pazmino MNCPPC

Kwesi Woodroffe MDSHA District 3 Atiq Panjshiri MCDPS RWPR Sam Farhadi MCDPS RWPR Justin Willits MCDOT DTE Matt Johnson MCDOT DTE Mark Terry MCDOT DTEO Wayne Miller MCDOT DTS Samuel Damesa MCDOT CSS Sandra Brecher MCDOT CSS Rebecca Torma MCDOT OTP

From: Patrick La Vay

To: Gatling, Tsaiquan

Cc: <u>Dickel, Stephanie</u>; <u>Harris, Robert R.</u>; <u>Andy Crane</u>

Subject: FW: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

Date: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 10:13:58 AM

Attachments: <u>image001.pnq</u>

~WRD0002.jpg

Re Question on 11999039A Friendship Commons (Geico).msq

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

Below is the email chain with Maire where she agreed to wait on the FDA plan. Also attaching an email chain from post DRC where the issue came up again, but I remined Marie we had spoken about it previously and she confirmed it was ok to wait.

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E.



P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196

From: LaBaw, Marie < Marie.LaBaw@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 4:23 PM **To:** Patrick La Vay <plavay@mhgpa.com> **Cc:** Harris, Robert R. <rrharris@lerchearly.com>

Subject: Re: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

Unless MNCPPC staff tell you they want an approved FD access plan now, I don't have a problem

S Marie LaBaw PhD, PE

waiting until site plan.

Fire Department Access and Water Supply Department of Permitting Services 2425 Reedie Drive, 7th Floor

Wheaton, Maryland 20902

(240) 773-8917 Office Marie.LaBaw@montgomerycountymd.gov From: Patrick La Vay <plavay@mhgpa.com> Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 9:54 AM

To: LaBaw, Marie < Marie.LaBaw@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Cc: Harris, Robert R. <rrharris@lerchearly.com>

Subject: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Marie, hope all is well. We are working with the property owner to extend the validity of their currently approved and valid preliminary plan (copy attached). This request will be in the form of a limited preliminary plan amendment. The only technical review that will occur with this extension request is a re-assessment of the off-site traffic/transportation improvements since the county's goals and standards have changed significantly since this original approval. We are not planning to make any changes to the approved density, site layout, etc. As you can see, the original plan was very preliminary, and the approval conditions require lotting and final site design to be reviewed at the time of Site Plan. In other words, no new development on the site can proceed without a Site Plan review by MNCPPC. In our initial meeting with Planning Staff, DOT asked that we follow up with you to get your confirmation that on-site fire access for the prior approved plan doesn't need to be reviewed with this extension request. My response was that the fire department access and water supply review can (and will) happen at the time of final Site Plan when we have an actual design. Can you confirm if this approach works for you? I'm glad to hop on a meeting to discuss further if that would help.

Thanks,

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E. President



9220 Wightman Road, Suite 120 Montgomery Village, MD 20886

P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196 www.mhgpa.com



From: Patrick La Vay

To: Gatling, Tsaiquan; Dickel, Stephanie
Cc: Harris, Robert R.; Andy Crane

Subject: FW: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

Date: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 2:13:50 PM

Attachments: <u>image003.png</u>

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

Below is the confirmation from DPS on the SWM Concept.

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E.



P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196

From: Etheridge, Mark < Mark. Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 11:59 AM **To:** Patrick La Vay <plavay@mhgpa.com>

Subject: RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

CAUTION: This email is from an **EXTERNAL** contact. Please do not open attachments, or click on links from unknown or suspicious senders.

Hi Patrick -

I've already made Planning staff aware that there currently is no approved stormwater management concept for this project, since the old approval has expired. I think I've also been clear that the decision of staff to move ahead with the validity extension is theirs and I will not make objection to it.

Mark C. Etheridge

Manager

Water Resources Section | Montgomery Co. Department of Permitting Services 2425 Reedie Drive, 7th Floor

Wheaton, MD 20902

240-777-6338

Mark.etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov



From: Patrick La Vay <plavay@mhgpa.com> **Sent:** Tuesday, September 9, 2025 11:05 AM

To: Etheridge, Mark <Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov> **Subject:** RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hey Mark, hope all is well. MNCPPC is preparing their staff report for the preliminary plan validity extension and asked that I reach out to you regarding the SWM concept issue. MNCPPC (and other agencies like DOT, DPS Fire Access, etc.) will be conditioning the validity extension with a requirement that Geico come back for a full preliminary plan amendment (or new preliminary plan) and a new site plan prior to any development moving forward. Can you confirm if DPS finds this approach acceptable with regards to a new/updated SWM Concept?

Thank you,

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E.



P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196

From: Etheridge, Mark < <u>Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>>

Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 12:04 PM

To: Patrick La Vay <playay@mhgpa.com>; Harris, Robert R. <<u>rrharris@lerchearly.com</u>>; Dickel,

Stephanie < Stephanie < Stephanie < Stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org; Bogdan, Grace

<grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>; Robert Kronenberg

<robert.kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org>

Cc: Elizabeth Wilcox <<u>ewilcox@jmzell.com</u>>; Scott Kaufmann <<u>skaufmann@jmzell.com</u>>

Subject: RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

Those times work for me, if I need to be there.

Mark C. Etheridge

Manager

Water Resources Section | Montgomery Co. Department of Permitting Services

2425 Reedie Drive, 7th Floor Wheaton, MD 20902 240-777-6338

Mark.etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov



From: Patrick La Vay <<u>plavay@mhgpa.com</u>>
Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 11:19 AM

To: Harris, Robert R. <<u>rrharris@lerchearly.com</u>>; Etheridge, Mark <<u>Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>>; Dickel, Stephanie <<u>Stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org</u>>; Bogdan, Grace <<u>grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org</u>>; Robert Kronenberg

<robert.kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org>

Cc: Elizabeth Wilcox <<u>ewilcox@jmzell.com</u>>; Scott Kaufmann <<u>skaufmann@jmzell.com</u>>

Subject: RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I can do:

Wednesday 9th: 8:00 am - 8:45am

Thursday 10th: 1-2 pm

Friday 11th: 8:00am - 8:45 am and 2 pm - 4 pm

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E.



P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196

From: Harris, Robert R. < <u>rrharris@lerchearly.com</u>>

Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 11:01 AM

To: Patrick La Vay <<u>playay@mhgpa.com</u>>; Etheridge, Mark

< Mark. Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov >; Dickel, Stephanie

<<u>Stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org</u>>; Bogdan, Grace

<grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>; Robert Kronenberg

(robert.kronenberg@montgomervplanning.org) <robert.kronenberg@montgomervplanning.org>

Cc: Elizabeth Wilcox <<u>ewilcox@jmzell.com</u>>; Scott Kaufmann <<u>skaufmann@jmzell.com</u>>

Subject: RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

Good morning folks. P&P staff recently informed us that our Preliminary Plan Amendment application will have to include a traffic analysis. We are anxious to move forward with our application and believe we have an appropriate process to address all requirements, while still recognizing the existence of an approved plan. Before proceeding, we would like to meet ASAP (TEAMS/Zoom should work). Can folks make any of the times listed below? Thanks.

Robert R. Harris, Attorney

Lerch, Early & Brewer, Chtd. rising to every challenge for 75 years 7600 Wisconsin Ave | Suite 700 | Bethesda, MD 20814 T 301-841-3826 | F 301-347-1779 | Cell 301-580-1319 rrharris@lerchearly.com|Bio

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From: Patrick La Vay <<u>plavay@mhgpa.com</u>>
Sent: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 5:13 PM

To: Etheridge, Mark < <u>Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>>; Dickel, Stephanie

<<u>Stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org</u>>; Bogdan, Grace

<grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>

Cc: Harris, Robert R. <<u>rrharris@lerchearly.com</u>>; Elizabeth Wilcox <<u>ewilcox@jmzell.com</u>>; Scott

Kaufmann <<u>skaufmann@imzell.com</u>>

Subject: RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

Stephanie -

Following up on the below, and building on Mark's availability do any of the below work for you? @Etheridge, Mark, please also let me know if anything has changed for you.

Friday 4th: 10:30 am

Monday 7th: 12:00pm – 1:00pm Wednesday 9th: 8:00 am – 9:00am

Thursday 10th : 1-2 pm Friday 11th : 8 am – 4 pm

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E.



P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196 **From:** Etheridge, Mark < <u>Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>>

Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2025 12:40 PM

To: Patrick La Vay <<u>plavay@mhgpa.com</u>>; Dickel, Stephanie <<u>Stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org</u>>; Bogdan, Grace

<grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>

Cc: Harris, Robert R. <<u>rrharris@lerchearly.com</u>>; Elizabeth Wilcox <<u>ewilcox@jmzell.com</u>>; Scott Kaufmann@jmzell.com>

Subject: RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue) [Filed 02 Apr 2025 07:04]

Hi Patrick -

Currently I'd be available:

Friday 4th: After 10 am

Monday 7th: 8 am – 2 pm

Wednesday 9th: 8 am – 2 pm

Thursday 10th: 1-2 pm

Friday 11th: 8 am – 4 pm

Mark C. Etheridge

Manager

Water Resources Section | Montgomery Co. Department of Permitting Services 2425 Reedie Drive, 7th Floor

Wheaton, MD 20902

240-777-6338

Mark.etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov



From: Patrick La Vay <<u>plavay@mhgpa.com</u>>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2025 2:51 PM

To: Dickel, Stephanie < Stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org >; Bogdan, Grace

<grace.bogdan@montgomeryplanning.org>; Etheridge, Mark

<<u>Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>>

Cc: Harris, Robert R. rrharris@lerchearly.com; Elizabeth Wilcox ewilcox@jmzell.com; Scott

Kaufmann <<u>skaufmann@imzell.com</u>>

Subject: FW: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Stephanie/Grace/Mark -

Hope you all had a nice weekend. I wanted to follow up on the email chain below to see if we can set a meeting with our three parties on the Geico property, the preliminary plan validity extension, and the issue of SWM. As you probably recall, Rebecca Torma brought this up in one of our prior meetings and asked that we confirm with Mark Etheridge if anything was necessary to address SWM. I believe it would help Mark answer my question below if we could jump on a quick meeting. Please let me know if there are some dates/times that work for you.

BTW, you probably recall Rebecca also asked that we do the same with Marie LaBaw. I confirmed with her that she doesn't need to review the extension request. I can pass along that confirmation if needed.

Thank you,

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E.

P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196

From: Etheridge, Mark < <u>Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>>

Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 12:55 PM **To:** Patrick La Vay playay@mhgpa.com>

Subject: RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue) [Filed 26 Mar 2025 13:07]

Hi Patrick -

There currently is no approved swm concept for this project, since the previously approved one expired long ago. According to Chapter 19, an approved swm concept is required before the Board can approve a Preliminary Plan. I don't know how this would affect the approval of an amendment, but I suspect that a valid swm concept approval would be required for that.

We may need to schedule a meeting with the Planning folks to discuss.

Mark C. Etheridge
Manager
Water Resources Section | Montgomery Co. Department of Permitting Services
2425 Reedie Drive, 7th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902
240-777-6338
Mark.etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov



From: Patrick La Vay <<u>plavay@mhgpa.com</u>>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 11:55 AM

To: Etheridge, Mark < <u>Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>> **Subject:** RE: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hey Mark. Our conversation about Brookville Road today sparked my memory on the below. Were you able to look at this? If it helps, I'd be glad to hop on a meeting.

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E.



P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196

From: Patrick La Vay

Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 10:13 AM **To:** Mark.Etheridge@montgomerycountymd.gov **Cc:** Harris, Robert R. <<u>rrharris@lerchearly.com</u>>

Subject: Geico Property - Friendship Heights (5260 Western Avenue) [Filed 19 Mar 2025 10:13]

Hi Mark, hope all is well. We are working with the property owner to extend the validity of their currently approved and valid preliminary plan (copy attached). This request will be in the form of a limited preliminary plan amendment. The only technical review that will occur with this extension request is a re-assessment of the off-site traffic/transportation improvements since the county's goals and standards have changed significantly since this original approval. We are not planning to make any changes to the approved density, site layout, etc. As you can see, the original plan was very preliminary, and the approval conditions require lotting and final site design to be reviewed at the time of Site Plan. In other words, no new development on the site can proceed without a Site Plan review by MNCPPC. In our initial meeting with Planning Staff, they asked that we follow up with you to get your confirmation that stormwater management for the prior approved plan doesn't need to be reviewed with this extension request. My response was that an updated stormwater management review can (and will) happen at the time of final Site Plan(s) when we have actual designs, in the form of Combined SWM Concept(s). In reviewing other similar extension requests we have processed in recent history, there is no requirement for the Planning Board to make a finding about stormwater management or any other updated site design requirements.

Can you confirm if this approach works for you?	I'm glad to hop on a meeting to discuss further if that
would help.	

Thanks,

Patrick G. La Vay, P.E. President



9220 Wightman Road, Suite 120 Montgomery Village, MD 20886

P: 301.670.0840 M: 757.810.1196 www.mhgpa.com



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity