

DATE

DRAFT, No. 1
7/28/2016

Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: The Collection/Chevy Chase Center
Limited Site Plan Amendment
Site Plan Nos. 82001021E and 82001013C

Dear Mr. Anderson:

This letter is submitted to state the position adopted by the Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers on August 1, 2016, with respect to the above-referenced Limited Site Plan Amendment (“Amendment”). The Amendment applies to two developments, the Collection and Chevy Chase Center, that border Chevy Chase Village. The approved site plans for the developments are of great interest to the Village and its residents. As a result, the Village has actively participated in the amendment application review process, extensively discussed the proposed changes with Chevy Chase Land Company and M-NCPPC staff, and has held public meetings and disseminated a questionnaire to receive the views of its residents. This letter reflects the result of these efforts. The Board appreciates the willingness of the owner and M-NCPPC staff to communicate with the Village on this important matter.

The original proposal included the following requests for amendment to the site plans:

1. Outdoor Restaurant Seating - ability to convert approximately 7,000 square feet of public use space and previous vehicular and parking area into private outdoor seating for a restaurant;
2. Modifications to Building Architecture - reconfiguration of the existing retail/restaurant spaces along Wisconsin Avenue to allow for smaller spaces and diversification of the store fronts to allow for individual brand identity, change of façade materials, and introduction of retail fronts along Farr Park;
3. Creation of Amphitheater Plaza – creation of an amphitheater plaza to include a lawn amphitheater with two curved outdoor steps. Vehicular access to the internal drive aisle located adjacent to the amphitheater will be controlled to allow for closure for special events.
4. Modifications to Improve On-Site Circulation – reconfiguration of existing drive aisle and perpendicular parking spaces into two-way travel with parallel parking and wider sidewalks, together with use of special paving treatments to highlight pedestrian area; addition of parallel parking spaces along Wisconsin Circle with a midblock crosswalk connecting to the Chevy Chase Metro Building; relocation of parking ticket dispensers away from entrances and a possible different approach to parking management; redesign of Montgomery Street into a traffic circle, were proposed.

5. Relocation of the taxi stand – relocation of the taxi stand farther west, closer to the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Wisconsin Circle.
6. Modification of Johnston Park Plaza and Farr Park.
7. Elimination of Condition #3 of Site Plan 8200010130 that requires a minimum 30,000 square foot grocery store.

We understand that the requests to eliminate Condition #3 with respect to the grocery store and to relocate the taxi stand have been withdrawn and we are in support of this decision. In addition, any plans for the traffic circle and other improvements on Montgomery Street will not involve vacation of the right-of-way and the Village will continue to exercise jurisdiction and control. The most recent plans for the proposed changes that have been reviewed by the Board were updated on July 20, 2016.

The concerns of the Board and Village residents focused primarily on parking, vehicle access and circulation, and pedestrian safety. Before agreeing to the improvements to the Village right-of-way at Montgomery Street, the Board must be satisfied that the approaches to the circle, and the pedestrian path to and through the development, continue to promote safety. Further, pedestrian safety, parking enforcement and circulation on Wisconsin Circle are prerequisites to the Board's support of the changes proposed for this perimeter area. Discussions with the owner and M-NCPPC staff responsive to these concerns have resulted in a number of changes in the initial proposal.

After a full discussion, the Board of Managers has voted to support the proposed amendment to the site plans, subject to conditions that reflect the following:

Montgomery Street

- Installation of the traffic circle and other improvements with consent of Chevy Chase Village
- Incorporation of a raised planting bed to channel pedestrians when approaching along the sidewalk from the buffer between the Village and the development to deter pedestrians from crossing over the driveway into the underground truck entrance
- A raised sidewalk surrounding the Montgomery Street roundabout
- Three speed humps on the easternmost driveway, the closest of which is no farther than 80 feet from the raised crosswalk
- Navigational signage visible to drivers upon entry into the circle

Wisconsin Circle

- Removal of the curb extension for the proposed pedestrian crossing immediately west of the entrance to the underground parking garage
- Maintenance of the three taxicab spaces in approximately the same location where they are today, immediately west of the proposed pedestrian crossing
- Addition of two short duration public parking spaces immediately to the west of the taxicab spaces, with parking permitted only during off-peak, non-rush hours. Note that this is acceptable to the Village only if the parking limitations are actively enforced with respect to these spaces.

- An option to remove a twelve foot wide section of the sidewalk leading from Western Avenue to the entrance to the underground parking garage, to allow for four additional parallel parking spaces in-set from the current curb-line. This option would still make provision for an eight foot wide sidewalk.

Internal Changes within Chevy Chase Center

- Installation of a ramp along the east side of the proposed amphitheater plaza area to allow easy access for strollers and wheelchairs from the upper surface parking deck to the lower interior street.
- Providing a passenger drop-off area in front of the main entrance to the Clyde's restaurant of approximately two car lengths.
- Removal of the parking gates at the entry/exit off of Western Avenue.
- Revision of plans to label onsite vehicular circulation patterns and access points

Additions to plans

Plans to be submitted for certification should include the following:

- The speed hump located closest to Montgomery Street is not properly located on the plans. This should be corrected on the plans submitted for certification, to show a speed hump and not a raised crosswalk on the driveway approximately 50-60 feet south of the existing crosswalk.
- Two additional handicap parking spaces are shown for the small lot in front of the Giant, which is incorrect. These should be removed to reflect the existing designation.
- Curb ramp details, revised spot shots (topography) and additional wayfinding signage should be included.

Further, we continue to be concerned with the parking management on the surface lot. No definitive plan has been provided by the owner. The success of the vehicle access and circulation, and therefore pedestrian access and safety, depend on an effective parking management system. We are requesting that the Chevy Chase Land Company report on the specific parking management plan that they intend to use prior to any approval of this amendment. If there is not effective and enforced paid parking, already-reduced surface parking could be swallowed up by commuters using Metro rather than by patrons of the Center.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this requested amendment. Representatives from Chevy Chase Village will attend the Planning Board hearing on September 8, 2016. We reserve the right to further comment on this application, once the Board has had an opportunity to review the M-NCPPC staff report.

Very truly yours,

Michael Denger, Chair
Board of Managers