

# Memo

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Debi Sandlin, Housing and Economic Development Advisor; Jeff Ulysse, City Planner

Date: February 5, 2024

Re: Library Apartments, 3325 Toledo Road Development– Detailed Site Plan 01002-04 Discussion and Action

Attachments: Detailed Site Plan (DSP 01002-04) Rev.  
Statement of Justification (A-SOJ-DSP-01002-04)  
Architectural Drawings (ARCH-DSP-01002-04)  
BPIS- DSP-01002-04  
LGHT-DSP-01002-04  
LSP-DSP-01002-04  
Metro III Memo  
City Correspondence

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the City Council with a summary of the detailed site plan (DSP) application for Library Apartments as well as City Staff recommendations.

## **Project Summary**

- The subject application proposes to redevelop the eastern half of the existing parking garage known as Garage A at the University Town Center into 209 multifamily residential units. The western half of the parking garage is to remain.
- The subject property is a 2.87-acre lot located at 6400 America Boulevard, within the Prince George’s Plaza Transit District Overlay Zone.

## **Project Details**

The subject property is a 2.87 acre lot located on the southwest corner of Toledo Road and Constitution Drive, approximately 265 feet west of Toledo Road’s intersection with Adelphi Road (Figure 1). The site is located within University Town Center. Hyattsville Branch Library is located directly to the east of the property. The site is currently developed with a five-story parking garage containing 1,455 parking spaces.



Figure 1. Subject site

### Project Description

The proposal would raze the eastern half of the parking garage (adjacent to the Hyattsville Branch Library) and construct a multifamily apartment building with 209 apartments. The western half of the garage would remain intact and serve as public parking and parking for the proposed multifamily units. The apartment complex will be 7 stories tall (less than the maximum 10 stories dictated by the Prince George's Plaza Transit District Development Plan). The Planning Board date is tentatively scheduled for December 14, 2023.

Prior to the new zoning ordinance taking effect on April 1, 2022, the subject property was zoned M-X-T (Mixed Use-Transportation Oriented) within the Transit District Overlay Zone (TDOZ) in the Downtown Core character area. The project is being reviewed under the regulations of this zone in lieu of the RTO-H-C (Regional Transit-Oriented, High-Intensity-Core) Zone which was approved on April 1, 2022, as part of the countywide comprehensive rezoning. This is allowed pursuant to Section 24-1703(a) of the 2018 Subdivision Regulations.

The site has road frontages on the south side of Toledo Road, the west side of Democracy Avenue, and the north side of Constitution Drive. Toledo Road is a City road. Democracy Avenue and Constitution Drive are private roads.

Garage access is currently provided along Toledo Road and Constitution Drive. Under the proposed development, access to the western portion of the garage will remain in its current location on Toledo

Road. To accommodate the redevelopment, the eastern garage entrance on Democracy Avenue will be eliminated along with the eastern half of the garage.

The applicant is proposing the development of a seven-story multifamily building with associated improvements, including amenity space (fitness center, outdoor lounge area, 2 courtyards and a dog run) and stormwater management. Improvements to the frontage along Toledo Road (City street) are also proposed.

The applicant is proposing 209 units of multifamily housing. A proposed unit breakdown is as follows:

- 103 studios (49% of total units)
- 93 one-bedroom units (45% of total units)
- 13 two-bedroom units (6% of total units)

A multi-story public parking structure will be retained on the western portion of the site with 727 parking spaces. This structure will be tied into the residential. The entrance to the parking structure on Toledo Road will continue to be used.



Figure 2 Floor Plans/Site Plan

### Associated Approvals

The below approvals preceded the Detailed Site Plan application. These approvals are included in Council's materials:

On December 14, 2022, the Prince George's County Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement approved a Stormwater Management Concept Plan for the site with five (5) conditions.

On March 7, 2023, the Planning Director approved a Certificate of Adequacy (ADQ-2022- 055) with five (5) conditions. The ADQ addressed transportation, pedestrian and bikeway, parks and recreation, police, fire and rescue, and schools adequacy.

On March 16, 2023, the Prince George’s County Planning Board approved the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision for this site (PPS 4-22004) with eleven (11) conditions.

### **Parking Analysis**

Fifty percent (50%) of the existing parking garage will be eliminated as a result of this development, and an updated shared parking analysis was prepared by Lenhart Traffic Consulting Inc. dated January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 using the Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation Manual, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (2010). A memo outlining the results of their analysis can be found attached. There are currently, 4,845 existing parking spaces. There are 1,456 parking spaces currently located at the subject property. If the 728 parking spaces located in half of the existing parking garage are removed, a total of 4,117 parking spaces will remain in the University Town Center. The analysis determined that 2,403 parking spaces are needed to service peak parking demand. Based on this analysis, there will continue to be a surplus of 1,714 spaces with the removal of half of the existing parking spaces at the subject property. The applicant has confirmed that no parking spaces will be reserved for future tenants.

### **Architecture**

The proposed development is a seven-story multi-family building, retaining the other half of the existing parking garage. The lobby, which likely encompasses the leasing office, is considered the primary entrance to the multi-family building, is located approximately 30 feet south of Toledo Road. At the intersection of Democracy Ave and Toledo Rd. TDDP designates Toledo Road as a Downtown Core A Street and states that primary entrances to new buildings be located on ‘A’ Streets (TDDP, pg. 265). Democracy Ave is designated as a ‘B’ street and the applicant was able to remove previously requested modifications to the design standards. Loading dock and service entrance located within the existing garage and not visible from the street.

In terms of building materials, the applicant states that the proposed materials are compatible with adjacent commercial and multifamily uses. The development will employ a combination of masonry, corrugated metal panels, metal cornices and a metal canopy located on Toledo Rd and will serve at the main entrance to the building. Additional materials include metal panels, railings, and non-illuminated letter/number aluminum signage along the top proposed canopy and along the front façade of the building. After meeting with Staff, the applicant made revisions to the roofline adding metal cornices to further accentuate the architectural design.

The proposed signage will be a combination of both horizontal and vertical oriented lettering. A conceptual breakdown of the materials and palette to be used on each side of the building is referenced on Figure 2,3 and 4 below. The developer is proposing a neutral color palette which primarily is a combination of dove grey and charcoal.



Figure 3 North Elevations

## Proposed Signage

The applicant is proposing two signs

1. Canopy style “Library Apartments”
  - a. Located on the north elevation, along Toledo Road
  - b. Dimensional letters will be mounted to the canopy top

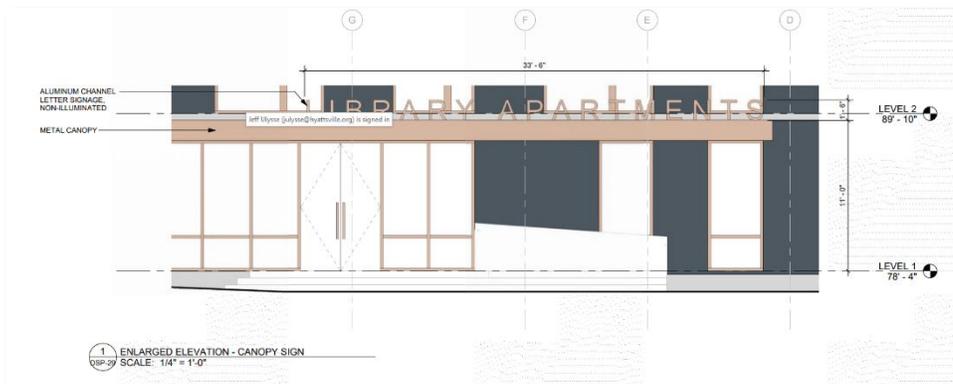


Figure 4 Canopy Sign

2. Vertical Wall Sign
  - a. Located on the north (front façade) elevation
  - b. Aluminum channel letter signage; non-illuminated

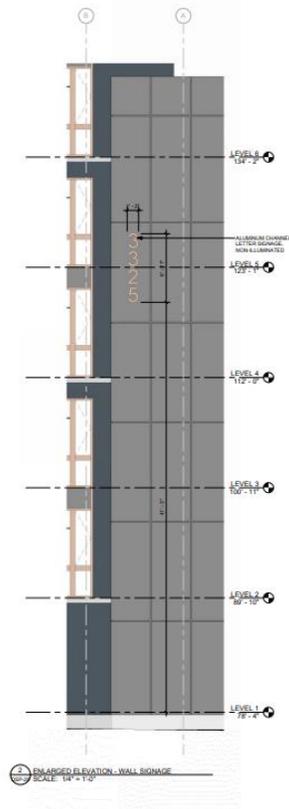


Figure 5 Vertical Wall Sign

### **Modifications to Design Standards (A-SOJ)**

The applicant is proposing modifications to TDDP design standards in order to accommodate the proposed re-development on the subject property.

The applicant states in its Statement of Justification (SOJ) that modification from the standards accommodates apparent unique elements of the proposed re-development of the existing parking garage to implement the addition of a multifamily building. The applicant has requested the following design standard modifications:

1. Request for modification to locate transformers above-ground along Democracy Ave where TDDP standards require that on A Streets, B Streets, Pedestrian Streets, or Promenades, no new public utilities, including, but not limited to, transmission or distribution lines and mechanical equipment, are permitted above-ground, if applicable.
2. Request for modification for building frontage that varies from 9' - 23' deep where the requirement for minimum frontage zone depth/build -to line, on all existing "B" Streets, is 15' and the maximum frontage zone depth/build-to line is 20'.
3. Request for modification for street light fixtures to be spaced between 40' to 45' apart where a maximum of 40' is required.
4. Request for modification to allow ground floor ceiling to maintain an 11'6" clearance where TDDP Standards requires the ground floor ceiling to have a minimum 14' clearance.

5. Request to modify TDDP requirements for buildings wider than 50' shall be designed as a series of building fronts no wider than 50'. The applicant is requesting a deviation from this standard due to the unique elements and structural constraints of the proposed development which seeks to re-purpose 50% of an existing parking garage to incorporate a multifamily building.
6. Request for modification to the TDDP standard for building placement that requires 100% minimum A street, Pedestrian Street, or Promenade and 60% Minimum B street for the side street building placement. The applicant is requesting to validate the existing conditions due to the unique nature of repurposing of an existing parking garage to incorporate a multi-family building which is further constrained by an existing retaining wall.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Impact Statement (BPIS)**

The applicant submitted a BPIS at the time of preliminary subdivision and upon submission of a Detailed site plan, where on- and off-site facilities proposed by the applicant were evaluated by Planning Department staff. BPIS measures associated with this application are as follows:

#### Proposed Improvements along Toledo Road

- Install ADA Compliant Ramps (Brick paver crosswalks will not be improved)
- Install Bus Shelter
- Install Bike Route/Wayfinding signage along East and Westbound Toledo Road

#### Proposed Improvements along Adelphi Road & Beechwood Road

- Install Continental Style Crosswalk (East Lef) (Only if No mill/resurface)

#### Proposed Improvements along Adelphi Road

- Install AdA Compliant Ramps

#### Proposed Improvements at Adelphi Road & Van Buren Street

- Install Continental Style Crosswalk (East Leg) (Only if No mill/resurface)

#### Proposed Improvements at Adelphi Road & School Access

- Install Continental Style Crosswalk (West Leg)(Only if No mill/resurface)

### **Planning Committee Review**

The applicant presented to the Planning Committee on November 7, 2023. The Planning Committee responded positively to the proposal.

The Planning Committee discussed expanding the color choices used in the development, options for concealing the proposed transformers, and parking (number of spaces, visitors' parking, and location of bicycle/motorcycle parking). In addition, the Committee talked about the importance of the crosswalks present on Toledo Terrace, as they are essential to connecting the development to transit, improving pedestrian safety and access to other amenities.

The Committee addressed their concerns with suggested improvements. Below are the recommendations voted on by the Planning Committee:

1. The Planning Committee recommends the use of inverted-U bike racks.
2. The Planning Committee recommends improving lighting in garage and installation of EV infrastructure.
3. The Planning Committee recommends cosmetic improvements on existing garage (such as art or a green wall) and in building materials to make the development more inspiring and add color.

- The Planning Committee recommends that the City Council pursue an alternative plan that addresses the designated trash collection area which we believe does not adequately safeguard interactions with pedestrians and vehicular traffic within the garage.

**Recommendations**

- Requesting transformer for the building be permitted above-ground.

City Staff recommends transformers associated with this development be installed subgrade, consistent with policy guidance per the Prince George’s Plaza TDDP. It is preferable that transformers along Public Road B be required to be subgrade. Subgrade transformers are more secure, visually appealing, and

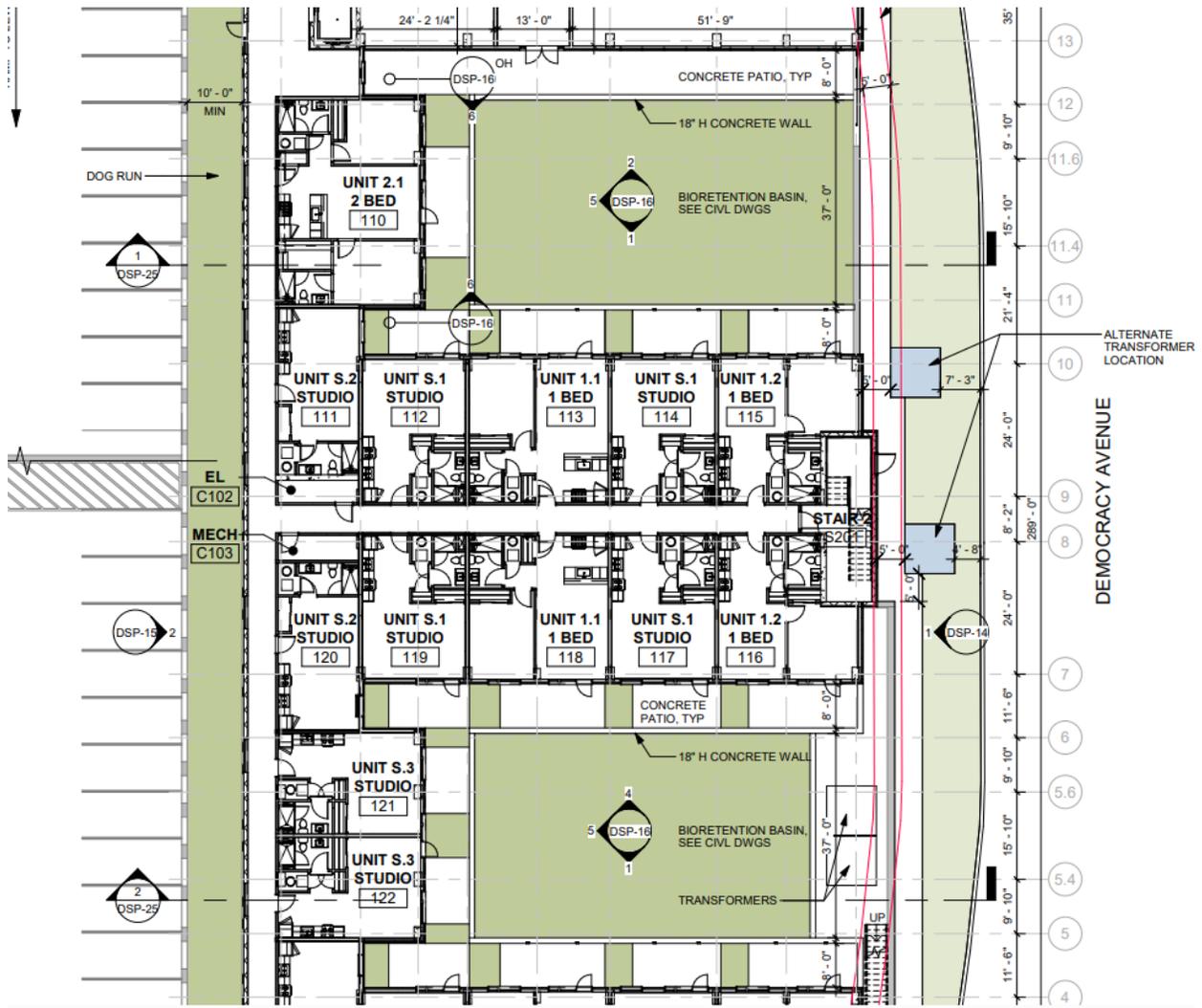


Figure 5 Proposed Transformer Locations

aligned with the intent of the TDDP than above-grade transformers.

The applicant has proposed the installation of screening devices around the transformers as consistent with the TDDP. Staff prefers the option one which is to relocate the proposed transformers within the southern-most courtyard subject to approval by PEPCO. Alternatively, the second option is to relocate

the transformers away from the corner of Democracy Avenue and Toledo Road with decorative metal screening (Figure 5) . Screening from the public view is essential, particularly along the east side of the property and we believe this will offer reduced impact and no impact on the urban streetscape. See relevant excerpt below:

“All mechanical equipment and meters shall be screened to prevent excessive noise and visual impacts on surrounding properties” (TDDP, pg. 248).

The locations of the applicant’s proposed screening devices and proposed alternate locations can be seen in figures 5 & 6.



Figure 7 Conceptual Locations/Screening Options

### Transportation Recommendations

City Staff recommends the establishment of a dedicated delivery and service area within the garage rather than have vehicles utilize Toledo Rd for deliveries. Having dedicated space within the garage will allow greater availability of street parking for non-delivery vehicles. the implementation of sustainable features is encouraged and as a result the applicant is proposing to incorporate EV charging infrastructure.

In addition, after meeting with City Staff the applicant has included 2 additional crosswalks along the intersections of Toledo Road and Constitution Drive as well as the eastern leg of Toledo Rd intersecting with Democracy Avenue. This right-of-way infrastructure is imperative to maintaining the connection between the development and newly developed Hyattsville Branch Library and providing safe pedestrian access.

In order to further promote bicycle use in the City, in the meeting with Staff a minimum of two (2) inverted-U shaped bike racks be installed in front of the leasing office along Toledo Road was recommended and is now proposed.

### Aesthetic Recommendations

City Staff recommends the incorporation of an art installation in a publicly visual location of the three stair cases on the east façade of the proposed project. This art installation can be integrated into a functional piece of the development particularly affixed to the three stair cases facing Democracy

Avenue. City Staff believes the incorporation of public art will promote placemaking, further activation of the streetscape, and create an overall better development product.

### **Next Steps**

The M-NCPPC Planning Board is scheduled to conduct a hearing to consider DSP-01002-04 on Thursday, February 22, 2024. Any recommendations adopted by the City Council at the February 5th, 2024 meeting will be conveyed to the Planning Board before the M-NCPPC hearing.

Staff is recommending the City Council adopt the following motion:

"I move the City Council authorize the Mayor to provide correspondence to the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission in support of Detailed Site Plan 01002-04, subject to the following conditions:

The City supports the applicant's request for the following modifications:

1. The City Supports the applicant's request for a modification from the design standards to locate transformers above-ground along Democracy Ave where TDDP standards require that on A Streets, B Streets, Pedestrian Streets, or Promenades, no new public utilities, including, but not limited to, transmission or distribution lines and mechanical equipment, are permitted above-ground, if applicable.
2. The City Supports the applicant's request for a modification from the design standards for building frontage that varies from 9' - 23' deep where the requirement for minimum frontage zone depth/build -to line, on all existing "B" Streets, is 15' and the maximum frontage zone depth/build-to line is 20'.
3. The City Supports the applicant's request for a modification from the design standards for street light fixtures to be spaced between 40' to 45' apart where a maximum of 40' is required.
4. The City Supports the applicant's request for a modification from the design standards to allow ground floor ceiling to maintain an 11'6' clearance where TDDP Standards requires the ground floor ceiling to have a minimum 14' clearance.
5. The City Supports the applicant's request for a modification from the design standards for buildings wider than 50' shall be designed as a series of building fronts no wider than 50'. The applicant is requesting a deviation from this standard due to the unique elements and structural constraints of the proposed development which seeks to re-purpose 50% of an existing parking garage to incorporate a multifamily building.
6. The City Supports the applicant's request for a modification from the design standards for building placement that requires 100% minimum A street, Pedestrian Street, or Promenade and 60% Minimum B street for the side street building placement. The applicant is requesting to validate the existing conditions due to the unique nature of repurposing of an existing parking garage to incorporate a multi-family building which is further constrained by an existing retaining wall.

The City recommends the following conditions of approval:

1. All transformers associated with this development shall be relocated south within the southern courtyard pending the approval by PEPCO. Alternatively, all transformers shall be relocated further south and properly screened as indicated in Sheet DSP-25.
2. The applicant shall integrate public art features to mitigate the volume/massing of the three stair cases on the eastern façade along Democracy Avenue into the development.
3. The applicant shall further address plans for the designated trash collection area which we believe does not adequately safeguard interactions with pedestrians and vehicular traffic within the garage.
4. Prior to Planning Board approval, execute a Declaration of Covenants Agreement with the City that includes, at a minimum, the following provisions:
  - a. Provision of public access easement to the City for any sidewalk along Toledo Road not located within the ROW
  - b. Acknowledgement of applicant responsibility for maintenance of pedestrian light fixtures, landscaping, and sidewalks
  - c. Restrictions related to construction staging and hours of operation, if needed
  - d. If feasible, provision of an outdoor public art feature

Note: The applicant will need a permit from City of Hyattsville prior to work in Toledo Road ROW.