

**CITY OF HYATTSVILLE**  
**PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**NOVEMBER 7, 2023**

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Register in advance for this webinar:

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**1. Introduction of Committee & Guest Members (7:00 PM)**

- Maureen Foster, Committee Chair
- Todd Dengel, Committee Co-chair
- Greg Barnes, Committee Member
- William Seath, Committee Member
- Marshall, Committee Member
- Sam Denes, Council Liaison
- Kareem Redmond, Council Liaison
- Holly Simmons, Staff Liaison
- David Thackston, Bernstein Companies
- Matthew Tedesco, McNamee Hosea
- Elin Nguyen, Varenhorst Architects
- Stephen Varenhorst, Varenhorst Architects
- Nick Speach, Bohler Engineering

**2. Library Apartments DSP 01002-04**

- Presentation
  - Matthew Tedesco, Applicant's Representative
  - Elin Nguyen, Varenhorst Architects
  - Stephen Varenhorst, Varenhorst Architects
  - Nick Speach, Bohler Engineering
- Overview of the Project
  - Project consists of converting the eastern half of existing parking garage A in University Town Center into 209 residential units. Parking reduction is consistent with the Prince George's Plaza TDDP. There will be a sidewalk and street plantings on Democracy Avenue and Toledo Road; a recreation facility (gym) overlooking lobby & courtyard; stormwater management in courtyards; patio features opening onto courtyards; and increased tree canopy onsite. Courtyards will provide light, greenspace, and views.
  - Modifications requested include:
    1. Modification to sidewalk clear zone along Democracy to reverse the order of the tree & furnishing zone and sidewalk
    2. Allowing for the screening of transformers
    3. Built-to line to accommodate existing building
    4. Streetlights spacing on Toledo to accommodate existing streetlights

5. Building form to allow 11'6" ground floor ceiling to allow proposed residential to align with existing garage (14' ground floor ceiling height is requirement)
  6. Planting strips to validate existing parking garage
- Clarifying Questions
    - Greg: Toledo Road will be only remaining garage exit?
      1. Matt: Yes. Entrance off Democracy will be razed.
    - Greg: Where is the pedestrian entrance?
      1. Matt: Toledo Road is an 'A Street' per the TDDP and the primary street providing pedestrian connectivity between residential and garage. Crosswalks on Constitution. Ingress/egress on Democracy at each protrusion on eastern facade.
    - Greg: Who will use the parking garage?
      1. Matt: Utilization will remain the same. 728 parking spaces available to public and residents, not dedicated to residents of garage.
    - Yohannes: What size are the trees in the courtyard?
      1. Nick: A mixture including magnolia, low-lying shrubs, most smaller trees - 8-10' height, max 15-20'.
    - Yohannes: Who maintains landscaping and stormwater?
      1. Matt: There is language within the landscape manual that provides for maintenance obligations.
    - Yohannes: What material will the sidewalks on Toledo Road?
      1. Holly: Sidewalks are proposed to be concrete. For the crosswalks, City wants brick to be removed and replaced with high-reflectivity continental crosswalks.
      2. Nick: Agreed.
    - Yohannes: Will residents able to purchase parking?
      1. Matt: "For the purposes of this DSP," no parking dedicated to residents. Future operations TBD.
    - Yohannes: Will there be a bike room?
      1. Matt: Yes.
    - Yohannes: What about trash removal and vehicle loading?
      1. Matt: There is no loading space required or proposed. The City has commented they will likely not permit loading on Toledo Road.
      2. Elin: Still working out details for how to remove trash, but planning for it to be offloaded in garage.
      3. Yohannes: Thank you for making sure it's not occurring in the pedestrian area.
    - Yohannes: Will there be a dog run?
      1. Elin: Yes. It will be open air, use astroturf, have low lighting, be fenced on the garage side, and have doors into residential area.
    - Yohannes: Will the courtyards have direct access from individual units?

1. Elin: Yes.
- Will: No questions.
- Marshall: If there is no parking set aside for residential tenants, where are people with cars supposed to park?
  1. Matt: The TDDP has no minimum parking standards. Code does not require parking. Garage to remain will have 728 parking spaces. There may be residential parking set aside in future but for purposes of this application, none is proposed. All of UTC is overparked.
  2. Holly: The TDDP recommends decoupling residential and parking. TDDP also requires a transportation demand management plan if proposed parking exceeds the maximum allowable.
- Marshall: Will there be a sidewalk on all sides?
  1. Matt: There will be none on Constitution Drive, as that road is not owned by Bernstein and there is a retaining wall that needs to stay in place.
- Marshall: Toledo road garage entrance will remain?
  1. Yes.
- Todd: Will there be any renovation of the existing parking garage (LED lighting, EV charging, retrofitting)?
  1. Matt: We're actively looking into how to retrofit for EVs.
- Todd: Note that parking for residential 'nested' in garage would cause further underutilization.
- Maureen: How many units?
  1. Matt: 209; mix of studios, 1s, and 2s. Strong demand for studio and 1, those were the first to go in the Highline.
- Maureen: Is there any emphasis on use of native trees?
  1. Matt: Yes, required to pick from natives.
- Maureen: Will there be solar or a green roof?
  1. Matt: Propose white reflective roof for energy efficiency.
- Marshall: Are glass and metal the primary product for exterior?
  1. Elin: Yes.
- Sam: Will construction materials be post-consumer?
  1. Elin: Plan to use metal with all recycled materials.
- Sam: Trash room is right by garage entrance. Is there a conflict with entrance and trash truck?
  1. Elin: Plan to have truck come into garage.
- Sam: When traffic study was done, how much vehicular traffic did Democracy Ave get?
  1. Matt: Will have to get info. Most traffic from development will be on Toledo Road.
- Kareem: Note that garage entrance is 8'2" and trash trucks are taller. How will move-in occur?

1. Elin: People will use elevators.
- Kareem: Does public access garage through stairwells?
  1. Yes.
- Committee Comments
  - Todd: Great project, converting garage to residential, will support surrounding retail. A few recommendations: Look at LED lighting for safety in garage; will be good to respond to the demand for EVs; would like to see something cosmetic done to the existing garage to remain – mural, etc.
  - Marshall: All four sides of building should have sidewalks, since this is supposed to be a pedestrian-friendly building. Pedestrians take path of least resistance, and they should have paths on all four sides especially if not providing parking. Want to see color on building, look for ways to add color in materials you use. Concerned with parking proposal.
  - Will: Concur with Todd's comments, agree with Marshall regarding aesthetics. Not so much lack of color, but building looks uninspiring and bleak. Could be addressed with color and materials. Would love to see traditional brick masonry that implies some longevity to our built environment. Otherwise pleased with direction of project.
  - Yohannes: Thank you for infilling an area that needs more housing and less parking. For bike racks, inverted U style should be used on exterior of building, nothing fancy. Trash and loading (residential moving in/out, package delivery) will continue to be a bigger concern. Should be considered further, as details do matter in operations.
  - Greg: Agree with general direction of Todd's comments. Think the project is a welcome addition to community.
  - Maureen: Deviations to development standards are well-explained. There are constraints in dealing with an existing structure retrofit. Modifications seem reasonable.
  - Committee Comments: This is a great project that will increase density near Metro and increase permeable surfaces. Exciting re-use.
    1. The Committee recommends use of inverted-U bike racks. Recommend improving lighting in garage and install EV infrastructure.
    2. The Committee finds there is opportunity for 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.
    3. The Committee recommends City Council ask developer to refine plans on trash loading as related to interaction with pedestrians and vehicular traffic in garage and loading dock to address concerns.

4. The Committee recommends the developer ensure pedestrian safety with appropriate sidewalk and crosswalk improvements on/around building.

### **3. Committee Business**

- May 16, 2023, Planning Committee minutes approved unanimously
- September 19, 2023, Planning Committee minutes approved unanimously

### **4. Development and Planning Updates**

- Suffrage Point DSP 21001 remand
  - The Planning Board held a hearing of the District Council remand on November 2, addressing only concerns related to floodplain, state/federal permits, and density. City staff testified in opposition. The case was approved 4-0.
- St. Mary Church (3705 Longfellow St) parking lot
  - St. Mary Church is proposing to demolish their existing surface parking lot and construct a new parking lot in its place. The proposal will increase parking from 35 to 60 spaces and the project will treat for stormwater quality and quantity (currently there is no stormwater management onsite). The grass area in the rear of the property will not be impacted. The project has stormwater concept plan approval and will proceed straight to grading permit. Start date is estimated to be Q2 of 2024.
- Holiday Shopping Campaign (Love Local)
  - City is organizing a number of activities to promote Hyattsville businesses regionally and locally November 25 – January 1:
    1. Offering free parking in all City-owned lots
    2. Investing in local and regional print, digital, and radio marketing including spots on Metro station marquee signs in Hyattsville Crossing, West Hyattsville, and Fort Totten Metro stations (featuring custom graphic design by local designer)
    3. Organizing a Shop Late Night, a Scavenger Hunt activity, and an online calendar of events and promotions planned by local businesses throughout the holiday season
    4. Providing a limited number of string lights

### **5. Additional Questions & Discussion**

- Maureen: Is the Church Place street art project working?
  - Sam: Anecdotal, it is slowing traffic and keeping parking lot from being blocked. New parking spaces on Gallatin Street are being utilized.

### **6. Adjourn (8:48 PM)**