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Development Review Comments

April 30, 2024

STP2024-00482

1st Submission Review Comments

2097-2101 Gaither Road

The following are Development Review comments from City of Rockville staff related to the project submission.

Reviewing Staff

Planning & Development Services (PDS)

Project Manager:

Kimia Zolfagharian (KZ), Principal Planner
kzolfagharian@rockvillemd.gov

Comprehensive Planning:

Katie Gerbes (KG), Comprehensive Planning Manager
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Forestry Reviewer:

Shaun Ryan (SR), Development Review Supervisor
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Fire Reviewer:

Charles Biggus (CB), Fire Plans Examiner
cbiggus@rockvillemd.gov

Building Reviewer:

Chris Dempwolf (CD), Buildings Plan Examiner Supervisor
cdempwolf@rockvillemd.gov

Dept. of Public Works (DPW)

Engineering Reviewer:

Dave Waterman (DW), Senior Civil Engineer
dwaterman@rockvillemd.gov

Traffic and Transportation Reviewers:

Andrew Luetkemeier (AWL), Principal Transportation Engineer
aluetkemier@rockvillemd.gov

Faramarz Mokhtari (FM), Senior Transportation Planner
fmokhtari@rockvillemd.gov

**Housing and Community
Development (HCD)**

Housing Reviewer:

Punam Thukral (PT), Housing Specialist

pthukral@rockvillemd.gov

Recreation and Parks (RPD)

Parks Reviewer:

Christine Henry (CH), Deputy Director

chenry@rockvillemd.gov

Publicly Accessible Art in Private

Development (AIPD) Reviewer:

Karyn Miller (KM), Arts, Culture, and History Program Manager

kmiller@rockvillemd.gov

PDS Comments

Development & Zoning (KZ)

1. TXT2023-00261: As proposed, this zoning text amendment would remove the maximum rooftop coverage limitations for buildings that do not exceed the maximum height of the zone. The provisions of Section 25.09.06.b limiting mechanical equipment that exceeds the height limit of the zone would remain in place.
2. Subject property is comprised of three lots: Ownership Lots 3B, 3A, and 3C on Ownership Plat No. 21711. Confirm whether a consolidation of three lots is proposed.
3. The proposed building height would require a waiver to the above provisions as the equipment would exceed the height limit of the zone (120 ft).
4. The subject site is currently designated for Office use (O) by the Comprehensive Plan and is zoned MXE (Mixed-Use Employment). The MXE zone is “intended for areas that are either currently developed or are recommended for development primarily for office, light industrial, industrial park, and similar employment-generating uses, this zone also allows for medium to high density development of office, retail, and residential uses. A mix of office and residential uses, including live/work units, is encouraged.”
 - a. Per Sec. 25.13.03, offices are permitted uses in the MXE zone.
5. Please provide a clear breakdown of the proposed parking at each of the phases with the Site Plan Submission.
6. Show the proposed pedestrian circulation paths, and how they connect the various parts of the site.
7. Provide additional renderings of the character of the proposed buildings and elevations depicting the materials.
8. Provide an illustrative site plan depicting the site from an aerial view, depicting the proposed new buildings, landscaping, and layout.
9. Provide additional information about programming of the parking garages, elevations depicting any screening provisions, and design solutions to enhance the visual impact of parking garages. The parking garage to the east is adjacent to Mattie Stepanek Park. What design elements are being implemented to screen the appearance of the tall parking garage from the park?
10. Provide an analysis of the impact of the shadows of the proposed buildings on the site.
11. Page 27 of the city’s Environmental Guidelines for Buffers for Undeveloped (Passive Parks) notes that “When non-residential development occurs adjacent to a public park that is undeveloped or passive, a park buffer or no-build zone, 20 feet in width, shall be established. Construction of buildings, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces shall not be allowed in the park buffer. Exceptions may be made for necessary road crossings, public utilities, and hiker/biker trails. Where park buffers are established, setbacks required by the zoning ordinance will remain in effect, and

will be measured from the property line. The no-build restrictions in the park buffer area will be enforced in addition to the restrictions created by the setback requirements. If the required setback is contained within the park buffer, no additional setback is required.”

12. Clearly mark loading areas and proposed screening provisions on the site plan.
13. How will the public use space shown on Sheet E3-3 be programmed for Public use? These spaces are located toward the center of the site, will directional signage be provided?
14. Confirm that all parking spaces are a minimum of 9 feet by 18 feet.
15. Per Section 25.16.09.c.2.b verify whether showers and storage lockers are provided per the long term bicycle requirements.
16. Section 25.17.03.a. of the Zoning Ordinance requires all electric, telecommunication, television, (including cable) and other utility lines and cables must be installed underground wherever an extension or relocation of a contiguous segment of said lines or cables is required. All underground lines and cables shall be placed in a public utility easement, or otherwise on private property. Please confirm whether utilities will be undergrounded.
17. See comments from Montgomery County in a separate memo.
18. See plan markups for additional comments.

Comprehensive Planning (KG)

1. Per Section 25.14.01.c of the Rockville Zoning Ordinance, any structure in Rockville proposed for demolition must undergo an Evaluation of Significance by the Historic District Commission prior to demolition taking place. Typically, the Historic District Commission meets once per month, on the third Thursday of the month. Please contact history@rockvillemd.gov for any questions about the Evaluation of Significance process, or to receive/submit an application for review by the Historic District Commission.

2. This application is consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The application is located within Planning Area 16. Several elements of the project application are/are not compliant with goals, policies, and actions outlined in the Planning Area 16 chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. These compatibilities are:

- *“Support the implementation of the Corridor Cities Transitway on Shady Grove Road.” - page 395. This application anticipates the need to dedicate up to 15 feet of additional right of way along Shady Grove Road in anticipation of the Corridor Cities Transitway.*
- *“Enhance the streetscape for people walking, rolling and biking along major roads in and around the planning area, with critical focus on improving safety along MD-355, to incorporate the principles of complete streets, as outlined in the Transportation Element, including wider sidewalks, bikeway facilities, such as greenway features as linear parks, benches, and landscaping, and other active*

transportation amenities.” - page 395. This application will be constructing sidewalks to the City of Rockville standard.

- *“Ensure that any new development or redevelopment provides park space to meet the needs of existing and new residents, in accordance with the City’s park proximity standard.” - page 395. The application anticipates the creation of a public use area that will include seating and a bocce court as an amenity for those who work in the development.*

3. Beyond the goals, visions and policies within Planning Area 16, the Comprehensive Plan also contains an Economic Development element, which this application supports. Specifically, this application furthers the following actions called out within the Economic Development element:

- *Goal 1: “Capitalize on Rockville’s competitive advantages, including its accessible location, cluster of advanced technology industries, educated workforce, and position as the seat of Montgomery County, to continue to grow and diversify its economy.” - page 178. The development of more than half a million square feet of office and laboratory space capitalizes on the growth of advanced technology industries in Rockville and prepares Rockville for success as new industry emerges in the future.*
- *Policy 2: “Actively support Rockville as a center for innovative technologies, creative industries life sciences, advanced research, and cybersecurity.” - page 178. The addition of new lab space supports life sciences and advanced research industries in Rockville.*
- *Policy 16: “Leverage Rockville’s Sustainable Communities Designation to Support Economic Development in targeted areas.” - page 189. This application is within a Sustainable Community area within the City, providing the potential for access to a toolbox of resources and incentives that may be eligible for the property.*

Forestry (SR)

1. See site plan for comments.

Fire (CB)

1. See site plan for comments.

Building (CD)

1. See site plan for comments.

DPW Comments

Engineering (DW)

1. See site plan for comments.

Traffic and Transportation (AWL/FM)

1. See site plan for comments.

HCD Comments

Housing (PT)

The applicant is proposing to develop a nonresidential site for the construction of Life Science buildings project, so this project doesn't require to comply with MPDU regulations chapter 13.5 of City Code.

RPD Comments

Recreation and Parks

1. Meet with Recreation and Parks staff on site to discuss and determine mitigation of trees on the property line. Contact: Steve Mader smader@rockvillemd.gov
2. As agreed during the PAM process, remove any paths between the development and Mattie J. T. Stepanek Park. Access to the park is via the sidewalk on Gaither Road
3. See Forestry comments for offsite plantings.

Publicly Accessible Art in Private Development (KM)

1. The Publicly Accessible Art in Private Development requirement applies to this project. Applicant must submit a concept plan with the submission of a site plan or project plan application.
2. Prior to issuance of a building permit, applicant must complete and provide an application and required attachments including a final plan.
2. Per City Code (Chapter 4, Article IV), the artwork must be installed and approved prior to issuance of an occupancy permit. An agreement shall be executed and a bond posted by the applicant prior to the issuance of the first occupancy permit for any art to be installed subsequent to the issuance of the first occupancy permit for the construction project.
3. The Publicly Accessible Art in Private Development application, implementation manual, and ordinance can be found here: <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/2081/Publicly-Accessible-Art>
Questions, contact: Karyn Miller 240-314-8101 or kmiller@rockvillemd.gov

Note: At the time of the next submittal, the applicant will need to provide a point- by-point response letter noting how the staff review comments have been addressed. Comments provided in letter format can be addressed letter format. Comments provided in the plans should be addressed via plan markups rather than letter format. See attached example.