## Bethesda Downtown Design Advisory Panel

### Submission Form

#### PROJECT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>7607 Old Georgetown Road</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>File Number(s)</td>
<td>Site Plan No. 8201900300 and Preliminary Plan No. 120190050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Address</td>
<td>7607 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Plan Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept Plan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketch Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Plan</td>
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#### APPLICANT TEAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Contact</td>
<td>Janel Kausner / Washington Property Company</td>
<td>240.482.8116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Robert Sponseller / Shalom Baranes Associates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Architect</td>
<td>Joseph Plumpe / Studio 39</td>
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#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Proposed Height</th>
<th>Proposed Density</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CR-5.0, C-5.0, R-4.75, H-225</td>
<td>225 Feet</td>
<td>Up to 200 dwelling units and 3,000 sq. ft. of retail</td>
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| Proposed Land Uses          | Up to 200 multi-family residential units (including a minimum of 15% MPDUs) and up to 3,000 square feet of retail uses |

| Brief Project Description and Design Concept (If the project was previously presented to the Design Advisory Panel, describe how the latest design incorporates the Panel’s comments) | ✅ Check if requesting additional density through the Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) |

Please see attached sheets
## DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Schedule a Design Advisory Panel review date with the Design Advisory Panel Liaison.  
   **Laura Shipman, Design Advisory Panel Liaison, [laura.shipman@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:laura.shipman@montgomeryplanning.org), 301-495-4558**

2. A minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled Design Advisory Panel meeting, provide the completed Submission Form and supplemental drawings for review in PDF format to the Design Advisory Panel Liaison via email.

3. Supplemental drawings should include the following at Site Plan and as many as available at Concept and Sketch Plan:
   - Property Location (aerial photo or line drawing)
   - Illustrative Site Plan
   - 3D Massing Models
   - Typical Floor Plans
   - Sections
   - Elevations
   - Perspective Views
   - Precedent Images
   - Drawings that show the proposal in relationship to context buildings and any planning board approved abutting buildings in as much detail as possible
I. Brief Project Description and Urban Design Concept

Washington Property Company (the "Applicant") is seeking approval for development of up to 200 multi-family dwelling units (including 15% Moderately Priced Dwelling Units, or "MPDUs") and up to 3,000 square feet of retail uses, underground parking, private amenities and streetscape improvements (the “Proposed Development”) on ±0.31 acres of property located in the northeast corner of the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and Commerce Lane in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor (as defined by the Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan – the “Sector Plan”) of Downtown Bethesda (the “Property”). The Applicant presented Sketch Plan No. No. 320180160 (the “Sketch Plan”) for the Proposed Development to the Design Advisory Panel (the "DAP") on April 4, 2018. The Montgomery County Planning Board (the “Planning Board”) approved the Sketch Plan on July 19, 2018. The DAP was in support of the design of the Proposed Development as shown on the Sketch Plan and identified the presentation as an example of an excellent submission particularly on a small infill site. The DAP provided two specific recommendations to be addressed through the Site Plan submittal. In addition to these recommendations from the DAP, the Planning Board’s Sketch Plan approval required that the Applicant “study alternatives for the proposed cantilever at Commerce Lane with a focus on minimizing the degree of overhang above the sidewalk ….” See Sketch Plan Condition 11.e. As described in greater detail below, this Sketch Plan approval condition relates to Condition 4.a as well.

With the impending Site Plan application that is going through the M-NCPPC intake process (and is the subject of this DAP review), the Applicant has organized this Site Plan submission with an emphasis on the primary urban design comments to the Sketch Plan. Therefore, this Site Plan submittal to the DAP is specifically focused on addressing both of the DAP recommendations as well as the Planning Board’s Sketch Plan condition of approval relative to the proposed cantilever on Commerce Lane. Each of these recommendations is identified below with a summary of how the Applicant's Site Plan design addresses each comment as well as an analysis of the Proposed Development’s compliance with the relevant Bethesda Downtown Plan Design Guidelines (the “Design Guidelines”).

**DAP Recommendation 1.** Provide more detail on the interplay between the building and Bethesda Place Plaza.

**Response:** The underutilized Bethesda Place public plaza touches the Property to the north and northwest but is associated with the Bethesda Place development. While the Applicant lacks control or ownership of this public plaza, the Applicant is in communication with the adjacent property owner to identify opportunities for pedestrian access from the Project into the Bethesda Place Public Plaza. The adjacent property owner has shared their initial conceptual plaza designs and the Applicant has adapted its conceptual design to seamlessly interconnect into the plaza space. The Applicant has included updated conceptual site plan and landscape renderings with this DAP submittal that illustrate a potential connection from the Property to the Bethesda Place...
Public Plaza. The building massing for the Proposed Development orients amenities and open space toward the public plaza, adding activity and interest to this public inner courtyard. Further refinement will be coordinated as final plaza designs are developed. However, the Applicant notes that it must obtain approval from the adjacent landowner to ultimately allow for any connection to the plaza.

**DAP Recommendation 2.** Reduce the visual impact of the loading and access areas along Commerce Lane.

**Response:** The Applicant endeavors to reduce the visual impact of the loading dock that is located on Commerce Lane. The majority of the ground floor frontage has been dedicated to retail and residential uses, but it is the goal to treat the loading and parking portion of the frontage, especially the overhead doors, with quality materials and rich designs to ensure that they don’t produce a negative impact on the façade. Additionally, three trees are proposed along Commerce Lane, which will enhance the street tree canopy and provide visual relief from the loading and access bays.

**Montgomery County Planning Board Conditions of Approval.**

4. **Building & Site Design**
   Prior to the submittal of the Site Plan, the Applicant:

   a. Provide a minimum 12-foot building setback, or as determined at site plan, on Commerce Lane and 20-foot building setback on Old Georgetown from the curb to the nearest point of the building façade including overhangs, cantilevers, or other building architectural elements/features;

11. **Future Coordination for Preliminary Plan and Site Plan**

   e. Study alternatives for the proposed cantilever at Commerce Lane with a focus on minimizing the degree of overhang above the sidewalk, and submit street level perspectives with Site Plan showing the impact of any cantilever into the pedestrian realm;

**Response:** After receiving comments and feedback from the Planning Board and M-NCPPC Professional Staff (“Staff”), the proposed massing was carefully revised to better address concerns regarding cantilevers over the public right-of-way. Along Commerce Lane, the building massing is set back a minimum of 12’ from the curb line, ensuring an appropriate environment for pedestrian as well as trees. The Proposed Development’s ground floor façade, in accordance with the Design Guidelines, follows a build-to line located a minimum of 15’ away from the curb line, greatly improving the existing conditions at such an important corner in Downtown Bethesda. Three street trees are provided on Commerce Lane as well as two on the Old
Georgetown Road. Both Commerce Lane and Old Georgetown Road have southern exposures so the street trees will not be impacted by the proposed redevelopment and should receive ample sunlight for successful growth. In summary, the revisions to the proposed cantilever along Commerce Lane address the Sketch Plan conditions of approval thereby allowing for a pedestrian friendly environment at the ground floor.

II. Exceptional Design Public Benefit Points Requested and Brief Description

The Applicant is seeking 30 public benefit points in this category on the basis that the Proposed Development satisfies and achieves the six identified criteria in the CR Zone Incentive Density Implementation Guidelines. The Applicant’s justification for 30 public benefit points is as follows:

Providing innovative solutions in response to the immediate context
Street, sky, and public realm context
The design of 7607 Old Georgetown Road is responsive to its site on two different scales: the scale of the street, and the larger scale of the Bethesda skyline. In both cases, the design responds to its unique neighboring context of streets and public spaces and its specific location in the Wisconsin corridor neighborhood in close proximity to metro center. Given its corner location along the primary rights of way of Old Georgetown Road and Commerce Lane, the building will be visible from a distance in addition to its street experience. The design embraces this duality with a unique composition of a street and sky approach by breaking down the massing. First, an approximately 5-story street scaled volume that contains retail, loft residences and two parking levels defines the street and scales the building to the pedestrian. Second, a two-tower composition articulates the building and provides a compelling sky profile. Together, the design accomplishes a welcome scale and profile for the neighborhood.

Creating a sense of place and landmark
Geometric inspiration, prominent location, terrace view
The proposed design is located on a corner site along Old Georgetown Road, one of the primary arteries in the center of Bethesda. The site shape is distinctively trapezoidal and provides geometric inspiration for the buildings form. This geometric inspiration is realized on the unique inflections that the two tower elements employ in their compositions as they address issues of neighboring adjacencies, corner articulation, and the splay of Commerce Lane. At the street scale the 5 story volume that comprises the building’s base is ‘splayed’ along commerce lane to follow its arc toward Wisconsin Avenue. Two tower forms, scaled to the residential units they comprise, are stepped back from the base as they embrace the skyline. These volumes are independently oriented with chamfers at their ends and along their flanks to address view corridors, provide outdoor spaces, and appropriately address the sites urban location. At the
main roof plane, the two volumes are stepped to create terraces and animate the skyline with a slender profile of overlapping vertical volumes.

**Enhancing the public realm in a distinct and original manner**

*Site DNA, ‘operable facades’, secret service*

The building sits along three distinct and interesting public streets and spaces. In each case the design seeks to support the inherent character of that frontage. The primary frontage on Old Georgetown Road is a busy commercial street with numerous retail venues. The design proposes active, contiguous corner retail frontage along old Georgetown road without interruption. Engagement of the public realm with ‘operable facades’ and storefront seating will create a memorable and unique experience for pedestrians. The retail plates will be tall, flexible infrastructure that will be desirable quality space. An existing curb-cut on Old Georgetown Road is proposed to be eliminated such that all loading and vehicular access will be provided on Commerce Lane. Loading and service operations have been combined with parking access to consolidate these services for an improved public realm on Commerce Lane and Old Georgetown Road.

The main residential entry and lobby will be located on Commerce Lane, which is noted as a ‘tree canopy’ corridor in the guidelines. A notably quieter, more intimate and distinct character occurs on Commerce Lane and is appropriate as the main residential entry street. Three street trees are proposed on Commerce Lane.

**Introducing unique forms and materials**

*Sustainable forms, unique envelope, rooms with views*

The design for 7607 Old Georgetown Road envisions materials that will complement its form, uses, and neighborhood. As required in high-rise construction the materials will be robust and durable and of the highest quality. Sustainable practices for buildings of this height include rain screen technologies for glass and skin, with architectural concrete as an additional option. Materials being considered at the sketch plan stage of design include large format metal or ceramic panels, and masonry or concrete panels rendered in a unique, simple pattern that compliments the overall building form. Beyond the three-volume composition that is finished with stepped articulation of the roof planes, outdoor space will form a secondary level of articulation for the building’s architecture. In addition to the outdoor connections envisioned at the street level for retail activation, outdoor ‘rooms’ will be provided for residents- carefully integrated into the buildings forms.

**Designing the development so living working shopping environments are more pleasurable and desirable on a small site**

*Live-Work -Shop-neighborhood*
By providing a quality urban living alternative in the vibrant heart of this Bethesda neighborhood the uses will help to support the emerging improvement of the public realm in Bethesda. As a complement to the primarily commercial neighborhood, residents on this site will provide the critical support that successful retail street environments need to thrive. By providing a building of quality that reinforces the adjacent sidewalks and public realm with flexible retail and residential living the building will provide and anchor in the existing street corridors in which it is located. The design proposes interesting and unique retail frontage, quality residential living and architecture, and a building that is scaled to the street life in which it is located. Street architecture will embrace the materials envisioned in the design guidelines with a focus on the pedestrian experience with minimal interruptions and trees and landscape design that complete the street experience.

**Integrating low-impact development methods into the overall design of the site and building beyond green building or site requirements**  
*Resource management, holistic design, biophilic considerations*

The site’s stormwater management system embraces the concept of on-site hydrology management for minimal impact on the public resources and systems. The design will manage storm water through a combination of filtering, storage, evaporation, and minimization of runoff on the site holistically. These strategies will consist of a combination of green roof filtering and storage, bio retention areas integrated into the buildings architecture, and carefully selected planting species that are native and drought tolerant. Other sustainable design elements to be incorporated into the building include: exceeding energy-efficiency standards by at least 17.5%; and providing on-site energy co-generation.

**III. Conclusion**

This Site Plan submission to the DAP addresses the urban design comments and recommendations made by the DAP on April 4, 2018 (and the Planning Board and Staff) at the time of Sketch Plan review. The Applicant believes it has addressed the concerns and requests of the DAP, Planning Board and Staff, and therefore, the Applicant requests a positive recommendation by DAP for the Proposed Development and a recommendation that the Staff recommend and the Planning Board grant 30 public benefit points for the exceptional design of this unique and innovative Proposed Development at this small infill site at the prominent intersection of Commerce Lane and Old Georgetown Road.
Though step-backs are one of the preferred methods to reduce tower bulk, especially on small neighborhood street types, alternative methods are outlined in Section 2.4.8 Tower. "Menu" of Methods to Reduce Bulk. These alternative methods particularly apply to buildings lower than 90–120 feet as noted in Section 2.1 Street Types, or to sites with limited size or property depth from the street.

**Design Guidelines: Heights & Setbacks**

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**TOWER SEPARATION DISTANCE**

**STREET SECTION AND SETBACKS**

**ALLOWABLE BUILDING HEIGHTS**

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**Map Diagram**

- **OLD GEORGETOWN RD**
- **WOODMONT AVENUE**
- **BARTON LANE**
- **WISCONSIN AVENUE**

**Table 2.01: Urban Boulevards Sidewalk Zones**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Building Placement</th>
<th>Building Form</th>
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Intent: Downtown Bethesda is an important location in Montgomery County for increased building heights to accommodate future growth. However, collectively, buildings at taller heights can be an imposing presence on the public realm by casting large shadows, limiting sky views and creating an uncomfortable scale for pedestrians.

A. Limit Tower Floor Plate
Reduced tower floor plates limit shadows on the public realm and allow access to sky view while also improving the quality of the building’s indoor environment.

B. Use Unique Geometry
Varied geometry adds visual interest and helps to reduce the perceived bulk of a building’s upper floors. Angled and curved facades allow a building to be viewed dynamically from different vantage points. They can enhance privacy between towers in close proximity by directing views away from nearby windows.

C. Vary Tower Heights
Whether creating a large development with several towers, or an infill development between multiple existing towers, variation in building height can reduce the imposing massing of several large structures built adjacent to each other.

There are several ways to reduce the actual bulk of a building’s upper floors or to creatively reduce the perceived bulk of the building. Below is a menu of design techniques that can be used to sculpt building towers and achieve a varied skyline responsive to human scale. Every project is not required to apply every method; however, several should be used in combination to best meet the guideline intent.

D. Modulate and Articulate Facades
Techniques to break up large facades and reduce perceived building bulk include shifts in massing to allow for upper floor terraces, green roofs and balconies; changes in facade planes; and varied fins, frames and mullions to add depth to glass facades.

E. Vary Tower Placement and Orientation
Similar to variation in tower height, variation in tower placement and orientation can increase perceived separation between towers, reduce the perceived imposing massing of several adjacent towers and increase privacy by orienting views in different directions.

F. Limit Apparent Face
The apparent face is the length of a facade plane that is unbroken by vertical changes in depth. Limiting this length reduces the perceived bulk of a long building facade.

BETHESDA DOWNTOWN PLAN DESIGN GUIDELINES | JULY 2017
1 ESTABLISH THE STREET

- Provide critical residential and retail use to neighborhood commercial corridor on sustainable metro site
- Reinforce street scale and presence along Old Georgetown Rd and Commerce Ln with active uses and building scale
- Reinforce plan guidelines for mid-block connection from Wisconsin Ave and canopy corridor on Commerce Ln
- Provide outdoor street activation along primary corridor
- Combine loading and parking entry on Commerce Ln to minimize service movements
- Reinforce Wisconsin core district with quality architecture along primary vista corridor in neighborhood and discovery trail

2 BREAK DOWN THE MASS

3 SHAPE THE TOWER

SITE PLAN DAP SUBMISSION

WASHINGTON PROPERTY COMPANY

shalom baranes associates

SEPTEMBER 12, 2018 FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY
1 | BASE: ESTABLISH THE STREET  
BUILDING BASE DEFINES STREET SCALE  
ESTABLISH RETAIL & RESIDENTIAL FRONTAGE  
ENGAGE INTERIOR COURT (BETHESDA PLACE)

2 | TOWER: BREAK DOWN THE MASS  
DEFINE TOWER MASS & SPLIT IT TO MINIMIZE BULK

3 | SHAPE THE TOWER  
ARTICULATE TOWER MASS TO CREATE SETBACKS

4 | INFLECT THE TOWER  
PUSH/PULL EDGES TO SCULPT THE VOLUME
CORNER PERSPECTIVE
WINDOW DESIGN OPTIONS
NOTE: OPTION 1 PLAZA CONNECTION CONCEPT IS ENTIRELY WITHIN PROPERTY LINE
NOTE: OPTION 2 PLAZA CONNECTION CONCEPT OVERLAPS ADJACENT PROPERTY LINE