

# Montgomery Planning

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE: February 12, 2021

TO: Bethesda Downton Plan Design Advisory Panel (DAP)

FROM: Grace Bogdan, Planner Coordinator, DownCounty Planning   
Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, DownCounty Planning 

RE: Staff comments for the February 24, 2021 DAP Meeting

## **7070 Arlington Road**

Hickok Cole

Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT)

- Sketch Plan stage, focusing on high-level conformance of building massing and urban design; 1<sup>st</sup> presentation to the DAP
- Staff met with the Applicant previously to discuss the Project, identified the following issues:
  - Building Height and massing at the corner of Bethesda Avenue and Arlington Road should address the scale of the building and small plaza on the north side of Bethesda Avenue across the street. Staff recommended lowering the building height at this corner, but also suggested that the applicant develop other approaches to modify the perceived height and mass to the same end.
  - Given the proposed building height and massing within the existing built context, this building will be prominent from the Capital Crescent Civic Green and the Capital Crescent Trail, in addition to Bethesda Avenue and Arlington Road. Massing and precedent studies should address this “multi-sidedness” directly.
  - The proposed inclusion of a pedestrian walk between the new building and the existing Apple store as Public Open Space connecting the southern Bethesda Avenue sidewalk to what is now a service drive and proposed lobby entrance raises questions about a public “There” sufficient to attract non-residents, as well as safety concerns about mixing pedestrian and service traffic.
  - The 18’ clearance height for the vehicular/pedestrian access from Arlington Road into the existing service drive/public open space court is lower than other comparable examples of 20-25’. How does this support the desired public open space experience?